TL
522
.C2
.L4

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY FROM 1883

## FOREWORD

A chronology of San Diego aerospace history gathered from sources in the San Diego Aerospace Museum Library and Archives, and from people who remember the San Diego flying days and generously shared their memories, logbooks and albums.

Corrections, significant additions and editorial advice is invited. Please contact the Archivist or author at the San Diego Aerospace Museum.

Edward L. Leiser
Chula Vista, California

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY FROM 1883

## 1883

John J. Montgomery built a glider and flew it from a hill in Otay,California. Although it was the first manned glider flight in history Montgomery kept it a secret and the achievement got little recognition for many years.

## 1887

A photographer recorded the hot-air balloon, City of Tijuana, in front of the half-completed Hotel Del Coronado (completed in 1910).

## 1895

Professor Melville entertained Coronado residents and visitors by ascending in his hot air balloon under which he performed acrobatics until descending into Glorietta Bay with a parachute.

## 1896

Engineer-inventor Octave Chanute visited San Diego. When he later recommended San Diego, California and Kittyhawk, North Carolina as the best possible sites for flying experiments, the Wright brothers chose the latter.

## 1898

Professor Wolford(?) brought his balloon to town and arranged to inflate it atop a downtown building for a transcontinental flight. Rather than put himself at the mercy of the wind he built large paddles to act as aerial oars to propel himself to the east coast. He and his craft proceeded south, however, and then east to end the first flight in Spring Valley.

## 1909

JULY 1 - San Diego High School student Waldo Waterman flew his Chanute-type glider down the hill at Albatross and Maple Streets. An engraved monument marks the site.

SEPTEMBER - The San Diego Aeroplane Manufacturing Company incorporated. It began building a monoplane with 50-foot wing span for Vice President and pilot Charles Walsh. It never flew.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY FROM 1883

## 1910

JANUARY 23-25 Most of the audience got standing room only at the Coronado Country Club polo field and race track for the first local Air Meet. Charles Walsh started off the program by crashing his monoplane into the infield fence while attempting to make his first take off. It was the first aviation accident in San Diego. An awed crowd watched Charles Hamilton fly the Curtiss Rheims Racer from the grassy infield on the first flights of an airplane over San Diego. Hamilton gave Mrs. Joseph Sefton a short ride, the first woman to fly in San Diego. Hamilton made the first flight over a United States international border on January 24 by completing the 37-mile round trip to Tijuana from the Coronado Country Club.

APRIL 3 - Waldo Waterman and Kenneth Kendall flew Waterman's pusher biplane behind an automobile tow at the Coronado Country Club. Charles Walsh made two successful flights at Imperial Beach in a pusher biplane he built.

APRIL 21 - Waterman broke both ankles in the crash of his biplane behind an automobile tow at the Coronado Country Club.

APRIL 30 - Donald Gordon made two successful flights at El Cajon in a pusher biplane he built.

JUNE - The Toliver Aerial Navigation Company began selling shares of stock and constructing a 250-foot hydrogen-filled dirigible in the canyon at 31st and B Streets.

JULY 17 - Professor Nemo's hot air balloon caught fire during filling. It rose unmanned over the Ocean Beach Casino and fell to earth a half mile away.

JULY - Bernard Roehrig soloed from the aviation field at Imperial Beach in the Farman-type biplane he built.

OCTOBER 8 - Roehrig was awarded the Knabenshue Cup for his flight at Imperial Beach on September 9 to become the first California pilot to fly a distance of 1000 feet.

## 1911

JANUARY 3 - In town for a couple days, Glenn Curtiss arranged to lease land on North Island owned by the Spreckles company. He prepared to open a School of Aviation and experimental base on the Island. Civilians would learn to fly for a fee, but Army and Navy officers would learn for free.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY FROM 1883

## 1911

JANUARY 11 - Three hundred members formed the Aero Club of San Diego, a branch of the Aero Club of America.

JANUARY 26 - On this date occurred the first reported flight of the world's second seaplane, a Curtiss pusher from Spanish Bight piloted by Glenn Curtiss. He hoped the seaplane design would be a bestseller. It was.

JANUARY 28-29 The Aero Club of San Diego held an Air Meet at the Coronado Country Club. Pilots Glenn Curtiss, Eugene Ely and Hugh Robinson thrilled the crowds with marvelous flights and races. Navy LT Ellyson had a minor accident while demonstrating his grasscutting technique in a Curtiss pusher.

FEBRUARY 7 - Millionaire sportsman Harry Harkness flew his Antoinette monoplane from North Island carrying a message from MAJ McManus at Fort Rosecrans to LT Ruhlen at an Army camp on the border. He dropped the message and returned having completed an aviation "first" by delivering a message between a Commanding Officer to a subordinate in the field.

FEBRUARY 17 - In a successful effort to interest the Navy in the practicality of operating hydroplanes with the fleet, Curtiss flew out to USS PENNSYLVANIA, anchored in the bay near North Island. After the biplane was hoisted aboard, Curtiss met his host, Commanding Officer Captian Pond, and returned to his North Island base in reverse procedure.

FEBRUARY 18-19 An Air Meet was held at North Island featuring Glenn Curtiss flying his hydroplane and Hugh Robinson in a Curtiss landplane.

FEBRUARY 19 - A large illustrated advertisement in the San Diego Union invited readers to buy shares of stock in the Rockwell Aerial Motor Plane Company of San Diego that was building a revolutionary new type of safe aeroplane.

FEBRUARY 26 - Curtiss flew the first amphibious airplane, a Model D called the Triad for "land, sea, and air," from Spanish Bight, landed on the hard sand beach near the Hotel Del Coronado, lunched in the dining room and flew back to North Island.

MARCH 25 - Army Lieutenants Paul Beck, G E M Kelly, and J C Walker graduated from the Curtiss School of Aviation on North Island as landplane pilots and got on the train for San Antonio, Texas.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY FROM 1883

## 1911

MARCH 31 - LT Theodore Ellyson qualified as a pilot, the Navy's first, at the Curtiss school on North Island.

APRIL 1-2 An Air Meet at the Coronado Country Club featured Hugh Robinson, Charles Witmer, and LT Ellyson. Robinson bombed a "fort" in an exciting and memorable performance.

MAY - Waldo Waterman got custody of the Curtiss camp on North Island during the summer. Waterman made straightaway hops in Lizzie, the training machine, until Curtiss sent for the engine.

APRIL 22 - Luvius Rockwell, the "inventor" of the Rockwell Aerial Motor Plane, skipped town with about $50,000. He left many worthless checks and no Motor Plane.

MAY 10 - LT G E M Kelly died in a Curtiss biplane accident in San Antonio, Texas. He was the first aviator, and first student aviator to die in an aviation accident of those who had flown in San Diego. What is the score today?

MAY 26 - Dr. Riehl conducted tests on North Island to demonstrate the feasibility of using kites for the defense of Navy ships against bombers.

JULY 16 - A balloonist and a parachutist held a $100 race to see who could reach the ground first starting at 2000 feet over Third and G Street. The balloonist lost.

JULY 20-22 Glenn Martin and Beryl Williams flew their biplanes in the Air Meet at Coronado Country Club with the best flying seen in San Diego.

AUGUST - Four men in the balloon "Globe," flew from San Diego to Table Mountain, twenty miles south of Tijuana.

NOVEMBER 11 - Filled with poor and hazardous hydrogen, C.H. Toliver's dirigible failed to rise from the canyon but it frightened neighbors in the few houses above.

NOVEMBER 21 - J W McClaskey arrived at North Island, in charge of six men with two biplanes to reopen the Curtiss School of Aviation.

DECEMBER 13 - McClaskey, S C Lewis, and J B McCalley qualified for their pilot licenses at North Island, setting a Pacific coast record for one day.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY FROM 1883

## 1911

DECEMBER 20 - Wind tore through the fabric on the Toliver I dirigible at 31st and B Streets. The hydrogen safely entered the atmosphere dispelling the danger to the community in minutes.

DURING THE YEAR - The library's Dewey Decimal System began including aeronautics as the number of books on the subject increased.

People sang the popular songs, "Come, Josephine, In My Flying Machine," "Spooning In My Aeroplane," and "The Birdman."

## 1912

JANUARY - The Navy established an Aviation Camp on North Island with three new seaplanes, two Curtiss and a Wright, and officers Ellyson, Herbster, Richardson, Towers, and Rodgers. After wrecking all the planes in the next four months, all the pilots survived to name the place Camp Trouble.

JANUARY 30 - LT Spuds Ellyson made the first flight Curtiss A-1 flight at North Island.

FEBRUARY - LT ~~Spuds~~ JOHN Towers, later Admiral, flew the Curtiss hydroaeroplanes at North Island.

MARCH 1 - Young Waterman rode with Herbster in the Wright B-1 to a crash in the bay which they survived.

MARCH 19 - Julia Clark became the first woman to graduate from the Curtiss school in San Diego. She died in the crash of her airplane less than a month later in Illinois.

MAY 1 - ENS Herbster made the last flight at North Island in the Wright B-1. Then the unit crated their airplanes and tents and departed for Annapolis and further experiments.

MAY 26 - An employee murdered dirigible designer Toliver and his wife.

OCTOBER - San Diego pilot Charles Walsh died in a crash back east. He lies buried in Calvary Cemetery, Mission Hills.

NOVEMBER 13 - The first fatal aviation accident in San Diego occurred. Curtiss student Elwyn Williams died after an accident on North Island. Perhaps his crash was caused by the "Rocky Road to Dublin," the title pilots gave to the gusty south end of North Island where his plane fell.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY FROM 1883

## 1912

DURING THE YEAR - The Curtiss School of Aviation graduated dozens of pilots, becoming the largest flying school in the United States. Students came from places like India, Poland, Japan, and China. A couple were the first from their country to learn to fly.

Attracted by good year-round weather, Army aviators brought their few airplanes onto North Island late in the year and established the Signal Corps Aviation School. (The Army placed aviation in the Signal Corps.)

Few pilots used safety belts, yet.

## 1913

JANUARY 1 - Class started at the Curtiss school on North Island.

APRIL 8 - Student pilot LT Rex Chandler died in the crash of Curtiss F-Boat, No. 15, the first Army aviator killed in San Diego, perhaps caused by gusty winds. Four more Army aviators died in crack-ups here before the year ended.

DURING THE YEAR - Army pilots flew Curtiss, Wright, and Burgess airplanes.

Curtiss seaplanes sold for $6000 FOB San Diego.

JULY - Theodore Macaulay got his pilot's license at the Curtiss school. (In later years he became an influential member in the Aviation Committee of the Chamber of Commerce.)

SEPTEMBER 4 - Army LT Love died in the crash of his Burgess on North Island.

NOVEMBER 15 - Lincoln Beachey, America's most famous exhibition pilot, brought his new pusher airplane to North Island, boasted he would fly the first loop in the United States (already done in Europe).

NOVEMBER 24 - Army LTs Ellington and Kelly died in the crash of their Wright C pusher on North Island.

THANKSGIVING DAY - Beachey did three loops and earned $2000 for each, a handsome profit from little San Diego, population 40,000.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY FROM 1883

## 1914

JANUARY 7 - The Army recognized the 1st Aero Squadron, at North Island, by General Order No. 75 approved that date. It had two Burgess tractors, a Curtiss tractor and three pushers, all trainers. The squadron was neither a trained entity nor fully equipped. LT Foulois commanded the unit.

JANUARY 24 - Francis Wildman began carrying passengers in a new Curtiss hydroplane on sightseeing flights around the bay from the Hotel Del Coronado landing. Wildman also instructed students in the hydroplane.

FEBRUARY 9 - Army LT Post died in the crash of his Wright C pusher on a flight from North Island.

APRIL - The 1st Aero Squadron left North Island for Galveston, Texas with three Burgess tractors.

OCTOBER 15 - The Curtiss Flying Camp opened a month early.

OCTOBER 20 - The Army held an airplane competition at North Island.

NOVEMBER 24 - Lincoln Beachey returned to perform his 1000th loop on Thanksgiving Day. By this time dozens of pilots had been killed on the exhibition circuits.

DURING THE YEAR - After Grover Loening, a civilian engineer at North Island, blamed the alarming aviator death rate on pusher airplanes, the Army condemned them and the death rate dropped.

Army pilots conducted aerial bombing experiments, and set many records of altitude, distance and duration, in Martin, Curtiss, and Burgess airplanes. Some flew cross-country to Los Angeles. Officers Foulois, Kirtland and Darque became important leaders of the Air Corps during later years.

## 1915

MARCH - Army officers watched 19-year old Georgia Broadwick demonstrate her stepfather's parachute. The Army bought none despite a General's approval.

MAY - With a seaplane built on India Street, Roger Jannus flew an Air Ferry between San Diego and Coronado, used most by maids and matrons, one by one.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY FROM 1883

## 1915

MAY - Pond, the first Admiral to fly at North Island, went up with Pilot Raymond Morris in a Curtiss monoplane flying boat. Morris managed the Curtiss school on North Island.

JUNE 4 - Georgia "Tiny" Broadwick made the first of several unusually dangerous parachute jumps over Balboa Park exciting visitors to the California-Panama Exposition until September.

NOVEMBER - The Exposition also attracted aviator Katherine Stinson (her brother became an airplane designer) to perform exhibitions for the crowds in her airplane.

DURING THE YEAR - The Army conducted successful radio communication experiments between airplanes and ground stations, and completed tests of several flying safety devices.

It was the last year for the Curtiss School in San Diego.

## 1916

MARCH - Birdseye Lewis attempted to fly from Coronado to New York City but failed.

DURING THE YEAR - Army LT Carl Spatz got his pilot's license in the spring.

Swede Meyerhoffer sold flying lessons and sightseeing flights around town in his seaplane from the foot of Market Street (San Diego's main street) until the war began in 1917. He completed 42 flights on one busy summer day.

Wrist watches were no longer "sissy," being worn by aviators, sportsmen and " the most masculine of men."

AUGUST - Marine Corps officers Cunningham and McIlvain began flight training at the Army school on North Island. Cunningham became the first Marine Corps aviator.

AUGUST - Ed Barnhart built a tractor biplane in San Diego.

SEPTEMBER - You could buy the 125-page illustrated book, How To Understand Aeroplanes, for one dollar postpaid from W.E.Walkden at 2869 5th Avenue in San Diego.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY FROM 1883

## 1916

NOVEMBER 4 - In the air over Balboa Park French pilot Joe Boquel thrilled Exposition crowds many times until he died in the crash of his pusher near the Cabrillo Bridge the last day of his engagement.

DURING THE YEAR - An Army pilot landed in Balboa Park. On attempting to take off the pilot couldn't attain flying speed on the short field. Mechanics installed a larger engine and he flew back to North Island.

## 1917

MARCH 31 - The Army Signal Corps Aviation School on North Island was the largest of six Army schools in the country the month before Congress declared war on Germany. Of 132 airplanes in commission in the entire Signal Corps 46 of them were on North Island. None were combat planes and could best be described as "service" airplanes.

| | |
|---|---|
| 23 | Curtiss JN-4B |
| 2 | Curtiss N-8 (JN-4B) |
| 12 | Martin TT |
| 2 | Martin R |
| 2 | Martin S |
| 2 | Standard H-3 |
| 2 | Sturtevant S |
| Total 46 | Aircraft in commission |

APRIL 6 - The US declared war on Germany. Congress authorized the President to take possession of North Island. The Army agreed to joint use of the island with the Navy. Naval aviators and other personnel began arriving before the year ended.

MAY - Captain Harry Brown learned to fly (he was the first North Island Army student captured by the Germans).

MAY 16 - At his Commanding Officer's suggestion, Sgt. Jim Krull, an Army enlisted flying instructor at North Island, purchased his discharge from the Army to become a civilian flying instructor which paid a lot more.

AUGUST 11 - . A shocking four-plane crackup on the Army field topped the list of accidents in 1917 as students and airplanes grew in numbers.

AUGUST 10 - The Signal Corps named their airfields around the country. Rockwell Field became the name of the Army [illegible] North Island. (LT Rockwell died in a 1912 plane crash in Maryland).

AUGUST - Army Captain Reuben Fleet finished flight training at SCAS(he founded the Consolidated Aircraft Company that came to town in 1935).

OCTOBER - Military police arrested an Army flying student accused of being an enemy alien.

NOVEMBER - The Aero Club of America proposed a Pacific Airway, with Camp Kearny, San Diego as its south terminus, to be flown by airmail planes. (Gen. Kearny participated in the seizure of San Diego from Mexico in 1846.)

## 1917

NOVEMBER - LT E.W. Spencer became the first Commanding Officer of Naval Air Station, San Diego. He leased buildings in Balboa Park until the Army made room for the Navy at North Island.

DECEMBER - Frank Luke completed primary flight training and went on to become America's second highest scoring Ace in 1918.

DECEMBER 9 - Local airplane builders flight-tested the Robbins-Schiefer pursuit at North Island but failed to interest the Army in the sesquiplane.

DURING THE YEAR - Army pilots continued to set aviation records from their North Island base. They dropped experimental illuminating bombs over warships, sent radio messages from a Martin TT over Santa Monica to San Diego, and practiced landings after dark with the aid of flares.

The Army required its pilots to pass specific flying tests before they earned the title Junior Military Aviator, Military Aviator, or Reserve Military Aviator (JMA, MA, RMA), and a raise in pay.

Army students at the Signal Corps Aviation School got $100 a month, 60 cents a day for rations, and the rating of Private First Class.

Army planes dropped paper bombs during Liberty Loan drives.

## 1918

APRIL 12 - A Loughead F-1 landed in the bay near the Army base, completing the 211 miles from Santa Barbara in 181 minutes, a new American endurance record (Loughead became Lockheed in later years).

APRIL - The Navy had enough Curtiss N-9 seaplanes and personnel to start flight training, and later, a mechanic course.

AUGUST - The Army decided primary training at other places sufficient to stop Primary training here. In its place a new Pursuit School graduated 225 pilots by the end of the year.

OCTOBER - The field at Oneonta became Ream Field, named for the Army's first flight surgeon. He died in an airplane crash during a Liberty Loan drive in the East.

NOVEMBER - After Armistice Day, November 11, the Army and Navy flew 212 airplanes in a vast formation over the city celebrating the end of the war.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1918

NOVEMBER? - Otay Mesa became East Field, named for Major W.J. East, killed in ~~an plane crash~~ glider accident on ~~November 4~~, ~~location unknown~~. East ~~flew~~ learned at North Island in 1916 - 1917. Oct. 2 near Mitchell Field, N.Y. to fly

DECEMBER 11 - Major A.D.Smith commanded five Curtiss JN-4H airplanes on a cross-country flight to Arizona.

DURING THE YEAR - The Army started an aerial gunnery school at Oneonta (Imperial Beach) using Curtiss JN-4H and -6H airplanes. Thirty SPAD 7s in the SD area for advanced flying work.
LT Jimmy Doolittle learned to fly at the Army school (later became famous for many aviation accomplishments).

San Diegoan Robert Jacks enlisted in the Royal Air Force, died in a training crash in Canada, and was buried at Mt. Hope Cemetery in National City.

At least five Army fliers died in crashes.

The Navy trained 206 pilots and 892 mechanics at North Island. None were killed in training.

All North Island personnel linked hands and walked all the rabbits into the ocean to control the flea population.

## 1919

JANUARY 29 - LT Jimmy Doolittle in a JN and another pilot in a Tommy Morse got their planes together over Imperial Beach. The other pilot died.

FEBRUARY 2 - The Army held a Flying Circus at Rockwell Field featuring every pilot flying every type of airplane dropping bombs, in mock combat, potato races, shooting at a towed sleeve, formations, and parachutists dropping from an observation balloon. Then came demobilization.

FEBRUARY - Demobilization depleted Army personnel at San Diego. Ream and East Fields went into caretaker status and the airplanes into crates and hangars. The Pursuit School moved to Tucson.

The Balboa Park Board granted an airplane concession to ex-LT James Hennessey just west of the Painted Desert (1916 Boquel Field; part of Zoo parking lot today).

MARCH 11 - Colonel Henry Arnold became Commanding Officer of Rockwell Field, and about one hundred officers and men.

MARCH 12 -Newspapers reported the first airline between San Diego and Los Angeles would begin within ninety days. The twin-engined Martins flying from the mesa at Chollas Heights never materialized.

MARCH 14 - The Navy's first fatal accident at North Island occurred when a Curtiss N-9 crashed in the bay drowning Ensign Chase.

APRIL 9 - Eleven airplanes including two Fokker D.VII, two SPAD two S.E.5, and five Curtiss JN airplanes left Rockwell Field to tour 17 western cities on a Victory Loan Drive.

APRIL 12-18 Major Macaulay piloted a DH-4 from San Diego to Jacksonville, Florida and back.

APRIL 24 - HS-2L flying boats began making a round-trip to Long Beach each day for military mail and passengers, and called the Cloud Line.

AUGUST 5 - Three planes returned to North Island in the evening from a 300-mile flight down south photographing the approaching Pacific Fleet. Pilot Kilmer in the leading plane, blinded by flares, flew into the water a minute before landing. His Radioman drowned. The other planes landed safely.

AUGUST 6 - In a Hanriot HD-1, LT Elliott took off from the wooden platform built over the gunmount of USS MISSISSIPPI and flew to North Island with mail.

## 1919

AUGUST 7. The Pacific Fleet, 14 battleships and 54 destroyers plus other vessels, arrived in San Diego. Two ex-Navy pilots flew the Chaplin Aircraft Corporation seaplane, a new Curtiss Seagull, on $10 per trip sightseeing hops over the ships all day long.

AUGUST 21 - Army LT Connolly and Waterhouse got lost on Border Patrol from Yuma to San Diego. They landed their DH-4 in Mexico near Bay of Los Angeles but didn't know their location. Search planes failed to locate them and gave up search September 9.

AUGUST - 9th Aero Squadron DH-4s flew the Border Patrol from North Island. Some Rockwell Field pilots patrolled for fires over the Cleveland National Forest.

SEPTEMBER 1 - USS AROOSTOOK arrived, the new aviation flagship and seaplane tender. Twelve gold stars on her funnel proudly stood for sinking Hun submarines during minelaying duties in the war. Before the war her name was BUNKER HILL, a civilian liner.

SEPTEMBER 22 - SGT Butler died instantly in the crash of his Hisso Jenny at 9:30am on Rockwell Field. The joystick steering knuckle broke and the plane dove straight in from 150 feet.

SEPTEMBER 25 - The LTA Department at NAS San Diego raised the first R-type kite balloon on North Island with a crew of two.

SEPTEMBER - Army personnel modified a Curtiss JN into a stretcher-carrying ambulance plane, all-white with red crosses.

OCTOBER 1 - The bodies of LT Connolly and Waterhouse indicated they survived for sixteen days before robbers murdered them. Their friends buried Connolly, a San Diegoan, at Fort Rosecrans, and sent Waterhouse home to Idaho. The wood aircraft panel on which they left notes burned in the San Diego Aerospace Museum fire in 1978.

OCTOBER 5 - The Balboa Aeroplane Amusement Service placed ads in the San Diego Union announcing their "location near the Painted Desert in Balboa Park. Rides over San Diego $10, or $100 to Los Angeles or other distant points by appointment in their 200 horsepower Curtiss Martin airplane." Leonard Jones was owner. Jimmy Hennessey piloted the airplane.

OCTOBER 6 - The Army at Rockwell Field entered seven airplanes in the Transcontinental Derby to collect data on military airplane performance flying both east and west between San Francisco and New York.

1919

OCTOBER
NAS San Diego pilots Reber and Kerr made the first test flight of the first F-5-L flying boat received and assembled on North Island.

OCTOBER 18 - LCOL Hartz, a San Diegoan, piloted a Martin bomber to Rockwell Field from Los Angeles, another leg finished in the Round the Rim flight around the United States. After a careful overhaul he continued on October 28.

10-29-19 Wedding
OCTOBER - The Navy organized the Air Detachment, Pacific Fleet into Landplane, Shipplane, and Seaplane Divisions. The categorical word "squadron" was not yet in use.

OCTOBER - Great news. The President removed regulations virtually grounding civilian aviators since 1917.

NOVEMBER 2 - The minesweeper USS GANNET arrived in San Diego to act as seaplane tender for the growing seaplane population.

NOVEMBER 16 - The Syd Chaplin Aircraft Corporation began a shortlived flying service at Coronado with a Curtiss F-Boat.

NOVEMBER 29 - The San Diego Airplane Company started a flying service in a hangar on Tide Street (Barnett Avenue in 1923). Jimmy Hennessey flew the surplus Curtiss JN-4D, selling rides and special flights. Leonard Jones was the boss.

NOVEMBER 29 - The C-6 navy dirigible arrived by train and was assembled in the new dirigible hangar.

NOVEMBER. A silent motion picture at the Cabrillo introduced San Diego to barnstorming. Houdini starred in The Grim Game. It featured an actual mid-air collision during a wing-walking sequence.

Large F-5-Ls replaced the HS-2Ls on the Cloud Line.

DECEMBER - The Navy got 24 Curtiss JN-4Hs and two steel hangars from the Army for their flying school. Other airplanes included Thomas-Morse Scouts, Hanriot HD-1s, Sopwith Camels, Curtiss F-Boats and HS-2Ls.

DURING THE YEAR - Naval officers Mitscher and Towers served here.

The Navy continued building a permanent Naval Air Station, and established an Assembly and Repair Department. One building became a landmark for fifty years, the new blimp hangar.

In addition to the murder of Waterhouse and Connolly nine crashes killed five aviators from North Island.

## 1920

JANUARY 18 - The 91st Aero Squadron landed their DH-4s at Rockwell Field after a one-stop flight from Mather Field. They flew to Ream Field the next day, their base until October for Border Patrol, gunnery, formation practice, and parachute jumping.

JANUARY 24 - Navy lighter-than-air pilots in San Diego flew their first free balloon from North Island. It descended safely in National City forty-two minutes later. LTA pilots learned to fly free balloons before flying dirigibles.

FEBRUARY 21 - The Pangborn Aircraft Company opened its flying service at a field beside the streetcar line in National City, owner ex-Army pilot Clyde Pangborn(first to fly the Pacific Ocean years later), one all-white Curtiss Jenny and partner Ralph Reed.

MARCH 2 - The San Diego Airplane Company became the Air Passenger Service at the same Tide Street address, with the same pilot, Jimmy Hennessey, under new owner, Ed Stevens from Detroit.

MARCH 1 - C-6 was the first Navy dirigible to take-off from the Naval Air Station. Sailors called it "riding the pig."

APRIL 1 - Army Hangar No. 3 at Rockwell Field burned to the ground destroying the stores of small arms, machine guns, ammunition and flares.

APRIL 10 - LT Hackett in a USD-9A set a Pacific Coast record flying from Mather Field in Sacramento to Ream Field in four hours.

APRIL 10 - Hollywood's premier aerial stuntman, Ormer Locklear, came to town. Apparently he inspired Pangborn and Hennessey with his presence. A week later they took their planes up for San Diego's first wing-walking demonstration by Pangborn complete with photographs in the Sunday paper. Upon landing, Pangborn declared his next stunt would be a plane-to-plane change over the city.

APRIL 18 - After an intensive training schedule which included bombing practice off Point Loma spotted by a Navy team in a tethered kite balloon, the 9th Aero Squadron moved north for forest fire patrol operations.

APRIL 25 - Two weeks after Pangborn's show, however, a Hollywood stuntman named Al Wilson completed two thrilling plane-to-plane changes over the Tide Street Aviation Field in a free show arranged by Ed Stevens of Air Passenger Service. Pangborn had to try some other stunt.

At about the same time the Pursuit School was reestablished at Rockwell Field.

## 1920

MAY 16 - Pangborn tried to surpass all previous aerial shenanigans by doing a car-to-plane change to entertain customers by arrangement with the manager of Coronado Tent City. He succeeded in practice the day before but failed on the sixteenth. He fell from the rope ladder at about 60 miles per hour just above the auto. A shoulder sprain and cut cheek resulted and ended the Pangborn part of the show. Pangborn's pilot, Reed and Hennessey in his own Jenny did some modest acrobatics but the finale came minutes later. A visiting Aeromarine 39 deadsticked into the Hotel Del bathhouse. Everyone survived.

MAY 25 - In a real estate sales promotion, veteran stuntman Horace Poole dropped from Hennessey's Jenny into the water near Ocean Beach. The Jenny engine quit suddenly and Hennessey got wet. He lost the Jenny. A boat rescued both men.

JUNE 12 - A mid-air collision over North Island between an Army and a Navy plane killed Louis Barin, Naval Aviator No.56. His friends buried him at Fort Rosecrans Cemetery. (Years later, a Navy field in Foley, Alabama got his name,)

JUNE 20 - Tiny Broadwick parachuted from Pangborn's airplane over Mission Beach but missed the paying customers by seven blocks and agreed to do it again soon but better.

AUGUST 9 - The Navy's obliging fish patrol reported a school of albacore on map coordinates placing the fish six mile northeast of Escondido in an alfalfa field. A correction was requested.

AUGUST - Naval Reserve aviators at North Island crashed eight seaplanes in the last few weeks.

SEPTEMBER - Mercury Aviation Company started a Los Angeles to San Diego airline. It didn't last but the all-metal Junkers-Larsen monoplanes attracted plenty of attention.

OCTOBER - 91st Aero Squadron returned to Mather Field, Sacramento.

DECEMBER 30 - Twelve F-5-L and two NC boats lifted off San Diego bay for a round trip to Panama and return in 1921. Several tenders accompanied the flight, the most ambitious yet, from North Island. Captain Mustin commanded the squadron.

DURING THE YEAR - The Navy's airplane inventory on North Island carried many World War machines like the Sopwith Camel and 1-1/2 Strutter, Nieuport 28, and Hanriot HD-1. Plus those there were F-5-Ls, HS-2Ls, Curtiss JNs, N-9s, R-6Ls and F-Boats, and the new Vought VE-7s. By years' end a twin-engined Martin torpedo bomber arrived.

## 1920

DURING THE YEAR - The lighter-than air unit at North Island participated in exercises to explore the value of dirigibles to warships.

The Army established the 514 Observation Squadron at Rockwell Field, manned by members of the Officer Reserve Corps in San Diego. They flew DH-4s and Curtiss Jennies on weekends. During annual two-week camps squadrons from other coast cities came to town. Sometimes it was the biggest event of the year.

Two of the nine new rules issued to all Army flying fields:

7. Do not fly airplanes unless they are in perfect condition.
8. Land airplane as soon as possible if trouble develops.

## 1921

FEBRUARY - Late in the month the Panama flight returned to North Island, almost two months since it left on December 30. They lost the two NC-Boats. All the F-5-Ls, and all personnel completed the remarkable flight.

FEBRUARY - The Navy received the first few of twenty-two new Loening two-seat monoplanes with 300-hp Hisso engines. Planned for use aboard battleships, the M-8-O was an innovation that failed in the aviation world of biplanes.

MARCH 28 - The Coronado Land Company won five million dollars plus interest after the Supreme Court sustained a California court decision on condemnation by the government of North Island for a naval aviation site.

MARCH? - A motion picture company sent their new Goodyear Pony blimp to visit North Island.

MARCH - The Navy sold their 1918 Boeing seaplane trainers, still in the original crates on North Island.

MAY 24 - Mercury Aviation Company in Los Angeles announced tri-weekly service to San Diego, using the field at Tide Street.

MAY 25 - Hennessey's boss, Ed Stevens, of the Air Passenger Service Company on Tide Street, sold the two airplanes, and three motors, to millionaire Buell Alvord from Arizona. Alvord bought a surplus Navy Sopwith Camel and another plane at North Island, shipped the works to Phoenix to open a flying school.

MAY 28 - Ocean Beach advertised "aerial suicide stunts by Jimmy Hennessey." The word "suicide" helped pack the house with customers jaded with ordinary barnstorming.

JUNE 21 - The Navy blimp B-3, on a flight from North Island, made a forced landing on the San Diego High School front lawn, a handy target for dozens of cameras before it left.

JUNE - The organization of naval aviation divisions changed to Fighting Plane Squadrons, Spotting Plane Squadrons, and Seaplane Patrol Squadrons (See October 1919).

AUGUST 2 - California commenced licensing aircraft and pilots, and marking airplanes.

AUGUST - Local Army pilots got orders from the War Department to stop stunt flying over cities and crowds, to not fly under 1000 feet, and to inspect an airplane not more than one minute-one minute-before a flight.

OCTOBER - The Navy suspended night flying because of budget restrictions.

## 1921

DECEMBER - The navy's new Douglas torpedo plane passed acceptance trials at North Island.

DURING THE YEAR - One mid-air collision and two crashes resulted in the death of three naval aviators.

The Cloud Line, an F-5-L, flew everyday to Long Beach and back, carrying mail and passengers, but not without forced landings at sea so often they seemed almost routine.

Brothers Rollie and Robert Tyce bought a used Curtiss JN-4D and a hundred dollar Thomas-Morse Scout. After necessary repairs they flew for fun from the foot of G Street in Chula Vista next to the bay. (The field remained an airport until 1941. Rollie lives in Chula Vista today.)

## 1922

FEBRUARY - Rockwell Field held a Curtiss Jenny sale. The lower end of the flight line resembled the test field at a wartime factory with planes being set up, buzzing around the field on test hops, and taking-off for home in Wyoming or Louisiana and, ultimately, into twentieth century Jenny lore.

FEBRUARY - Carpenters built a wood-planked platform over part of the ample flying field on North Island. It corresponded to the deck of the experimental aircraft carrier being converted from a collier at Norfolk, Virginia. Pilots practiced taking off and landing on the 525 X 65 foot deck in anticipation of the carrier's arrival.

MARCH 4 - Navy Chief Petty Officers held an aviation spectacle over Balboa Park. Hired stuntmen and pilots delighted customers. Augie Pedlar wing-walked in handcuffs. His plane struck a careless tourist on landing. That cancelled the parachute race. Instead one jumper did the Bullet Drop, turning his parachute inside out during the fall.

JUNE 17 - The Navy reorganized their local aviation force into Aircraft Squadrons Battle Fleet. The squadrons also received new nomenclature.

Combat Squadron = VF or Heavier-than-air Fighting Squadron.
Spotting Squadron = VO or Observation Squadron.
Seaplane Patrol Squadron = VT or Torpedo Squadron.

North Island-based outfits were VF-1, VF-2, VO-1, VO-2, and VT-2.

JULY 12 - Signs of the times. Navy pilot Studley practiced landing at Bootleggers Field (now Balboa Avenue and Charger Boulevard).

AUGUST 15 - Naval Aviation Carpenter 1/c Porter and ex-sailor friend Jordan bought a surplus Sopwith 1-1/2 Strutter at North Island for $500. After they hung an OXX-6 on it Jordan taught Porter to fly. Following Porter's Honorable Discharge from the service at 10:30am, officers and men gave them a great send-off and they took off for Colorado.

SEPTEMBER 4 - Army pilot Jimmy Doolittle flew a DH-4 from Jacksonville to San Diego in record time.

SEPTEMBER 9 - The Army dirigible, Goodrich C-2, completed the first trans-continental dirigible flight at Rockwell Field (not Goodyear).

SEPTEMBER 15 - When his engine quit during formation practice over La Jolla, navy pilot Shafer guided his Vought to a landing but struck high tension wires. He died after the crash.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1922

~~BEFORE SEPTEMBER~~ - Jimmy Hennessey set up a flying service at the foot of B Street but was shortly arrested and jailed for smuggling.

SEPTEMBER - Claude Ryan, an ex-Army Reserve pilot from Kansas, took over the foot of B Street and ran a flying service with a surplus Curtiss Jenny.

OCTOBER 3 - The Army's Fokker T-2 attempted a nonstop flight from San Diego to New York but failed to lift its heavy load of fuel over the mountains. Macready and Kelly continued to fly around San Diego for two days and set a new duration record before landing back on Rockwell Field.

OCTOBER 14 - Pilots Owen and Wyatt flew two Navy DH-4Bs to the East Coast and back.

NOVEMBER 3 - Army pilots Macready and Kelly flew a half-loaded Fokker T-2 to Indiana, then to New York to try the transcontinental flight east to west.

DECEMBER 7 - An Army DH-4 left Rockwell Field for Arizona and never arrived. Repeated searches failed to find the crash site until 1923.

DURING THE YEAR - Carl Oelze established the San Diego Airport and Flying School at the Tide Street address of the old Air Passenger Service.

The initials RAID appeared on the Army planes at Rockwell Field, the initials for Rockwell Air Intermediate Depot, as the Army redesignated several fields around the country.

Naval fighter aircraft were Vought VE-7s and Nieuport 28s. VO pilots flew DH-4Bs, and the Torpedo Squadron had old Curtiss N-9s, the new Douglas DT-2s, and still flew the Cloud Line with F-5-Ls.

Some North Island Vought airplanes and pilots went aboard catapult-equipped battleships. OKLAHOMA (BB-37) was first ~~with~~ a ship-aviation unit.

1923

FEBRUARY AND MAY - Rockwell Field auctioned off spare parts for JN, Thomas-Morse, SPAD and Nieuport 28 airplanes, 2859 propellers, 344 wicker pilot seats, 165 OX-5 and Hisso engines...the list goes on.

MARCH - Claude Ryan ~~found the growing number of power lines around his B Street field too dangerous.~~ He rented land at Tide Street and moved. Construction began on the B Street piers, blocked Ryan's runway. Good soaring business from tourboses passing by — telephone wires ~~Kinda~~ safety hazard in TTO. Frank Page bought a lot of Thomas-Morse S-4C Scouts from Rockwell Field. He stored them in a warehouse by the railroad track along the waterfront and offered them for sale as late as 1929. For $200 he would assemble and rig one for a customer, and offer a few lessons.

Battleships Maryland and Nevada got Vought airplanes from North Island for their new catapults.

MARCH 22 - A white S.E.5 spelled "LUCKY STRIKE" in smoke over the city. Captain Tait-Cox flew the plane under contract to the American Tobacco Company, probably the first such aerial advertising in the city's history.

APRIL 30- A Vought with an experimental reversible propeller crashed during landing at North Island, wrecking the plane and bruising enlisted pilot Kerr and his mechanic.

APRIL - Torpedo Squadron 2 loaded their Douglas DT-2s aboard JASON (AC-12) for a few months in the Hawaiian Island.

MAY 12 - A rancher found the DH-4 missing since December 7 on a flight from Rockwell Field, in the Cuyamaca Mountains. Volunteers anchored the Liberty engine in concrete at the crash site, with a memorial plaque, where hikers find it and wonder.

MAY 2-3 Pilots Macready and Kelly flew their Army Fokker T-2 from Mitchel Field, New York to Rockwell Field, San Diego, completing the first nonstop transcontinental east-west flight across the United States in 26 hours and 50 minutes. Many years passed before nonstop transcontinental flights became routine.

June 28 - A tragedy occurred. Navy LT Hewitt, a fighter pilot in VF-1, tested a wartime Spad VII modified to a parasol monoplane by Aviatio/Machinist Mate Charles Rocheville. It crashed and exploded on North Island. Hewitt died.

JUNE 6-7 Navy pilots from North Island set world records flying F-5-Ls, DT-2s, and Curtiss TS-1s from the Fighter Squadrons.

Most of the Navy planes were obsolescent de Havilland DH-4 modifications of a 1916 English bomber built under license in America since the war.

## 1923

JUNE - Perhaps inspired by the T-2 duration flights, innovative Army pilots at Rockwell Field modified two DH-4Bs to try another form of endurance flight. Late in June they completed the first aerial refueling of one airplane by another using hoses. LTs Hine and Seifert fueled Smith and Richter during their flight up and down San Diego bay.

JULY - The navy squadrons held war games. Typically the navy practiced and trained all year, then held an annual competition to achieve the best unit scores.

AUGUST - Using the new aerial refueling technique, Army pilots Smith and Richter set an endurance record of 25 hours, and 15 minutes, in a DH-4B over San Diego bay.

Ryan added a Thomas-Morse Scout to his flying machines, and a friend, Hawley Bowlus, to his work force as supervisor of the airplane repair work (owned a glider company later on).

SEPTEMBER 10 - Navy photographers took the first aerial photographs of a total eclipse of the sun.

OCTOBER - The successful aerial refueling in August inspired a nonstop flight from Washington state to San Diego. Afterwards, the Army ordered the airplanes returned to their original configuration. Perhaps the brass feared an expensive transcontinental refueling flight.(The idea hibernated until fuel-gulping jets needed a better combat radius.)

NOVEMBER - RAID got 100 DH-4s for overhaul that arrived by ship from the Philippines.

NOVEMBER - Aircraft Squadrons Battle Fleet established the first aerial torpedo range on the Pacific coast, due south of the whistle buoy marked by four can buoys 1000 yards apart.

DURING THE YEAR - Rollie Tyce got the sun in his eyes while landing in Chula Vista. He clipped two 11,000 volt power lines. With damaged wings he held the plane straight and level for a bit before it spun into a celery field. The fuselage broke in two. The passenger injured his head.

One of the more startling annual statistics was the rising number of fatalities in local naval aviation. Eight navy aviators lost their lives in the San Diego area during the year. A smoke bomb ignited in the hold of an F-5-L in flight, an N-9 crashed in the bay, a Vought dived into the ground near Sweetwater Lake, and a Vought flew into a JN over Coronado. They tumbled into the Bight; no survivors.

## 1924

JANUARY 3 - VT-20 loaded six Douglas DT-2 torpedo planes aboard ship and shoved off for the Asiatic Fleet.

JANUARY - Captain Georges Thenault, a French Naval attache, visited NAS San Diego. In the war he commanded the Escadrille Lafayette, a squadron of American volunteers who flew for the French.

JANUARY - The navy went to sea and held Fleet Exercises in the Caribbean. JASON and AROOSTOOK carried 46 airplanes. The fleet returned in April.

FEBRUARY - VF-1 personnel assembled and tested new Martin MO-1 monoplanes while the fleet was gone. They disliked them.

MARCH 8 - Before the Army's four Douglas World Cruisers began their six-month round-the-world saga, they flew down to North Island. Pilots swung their compasses and mechanics changed engines at Rockwell Field.

MAY 22 - Navy LT Frank Fake flew a Blackburn Swift, one of two bought from the British, dropping torpedos in the bay and evaluating its possible use in Naval aviation.

AUGUST 16 - The Marines landed. VO-1M, an observation squadron, unloaded eight weary DH-4Bs on the pier at North Island. USS JASON brought them from the Dominican Republic. Their descendents didn't leave San Diego until 1947.

AUGUST - The Marine Brigade Post opened its gates on Tide Street. The city promptly renamed the street for Major General Barnett, commandant of the Marine Corps. Today, the base is the Marine Corps Recruit Depot on Barnett Avenue.

AUGUST - Margaret Ward became Mrs. G.H Brentner in E.E.Bennett's four-passenger Standard above the surf at Ocean Beach.

AUGUST - Floyd Parsons leaped from a racing boat to a ladder trailing behind Frank Sheltz' airplane at Coronado Tent City. But he couldn't hold on and hit the water at 60 knots.

AUGUST - One hundred ten Army Reserve pilots and the planes from six squadrons held a two-week camp at Rockwell Field.

SEPTEMBER 22 - The Army Round the World airplanes landed at Rockwell Field, successfully completing the flight to the cheers of thousands of greeters.

## 1924

SEPTEMBER - Ryan bought two Standard J-1 Hisso-powered trainers. Bowlus modified the powerful airplanes - could climb while looping - into wide-bodied airliners. He placed four passenger seats inside the fuselage ahead of the pilot. (airliners but no airline, yet.) Ryan used them for sight-seeing flights, even bussed tourists from Los Angeles at a profit.

OCTOBER 10 - The largest aircraft in the United States flew to San Diego. The 680-foot long dirigible, USS SHENANDOAH (ZR-1) thrilled San Diegoans, its awesome bulk droning above the city before mooring to a mast erected on North Island. Almost everyone was a dirigible fan before it left a week later. Its brief influence affected local judgement for years.

NOVEMBER 29 - USS LANGLEY (CV-1), the Navy's first "plane carrier", tied up at North Island. The Navy's first carrier pilots learned their trade aboard the "Covered Wagon," until the experimental ship left town in 1936.

DECEMBER 10 - The year's worst accident took five lives. An H-16 with several VF personnel on machine gun practice spun into the ocean about 500 yards from the Rockwell Field officers' quarters.

DECEMBER 22 - The Chamber of Commerce discussed starting a municipal airport, enacting a city ordinance to control aviation, and getting the city on an air mail route. In 1925 they got one of their wishes.

DECEMBER - Dutch Flats attracted another flying service. Martin "GOOF" Jensen's new business competed with the Ryan Flying Company and San Diego Airport and Flying School attracting customers to Barnett Avenue.

DURING THE YEAR. Rollie Tyce added a $300 war surplus Spad fighter to his hangar in Chula Vista.

One of Claude Ryan's early ads: Learn to fly in San Diego. Flying every day of the year. Ex-Army instructors. Complete course $200. Best flying field in the west. Tide Street, San Diego, California. Ryan Flying Company.

The Koehler's, father and son, sold aviation supplies at 644 F Street in Coronado. Edward was a pilot, and Dad was the machinist and supply manager.

DH-4Bs, Curtiss JNs and N-9s, F-5-Ls, and H-16s made up the majority of aircraft flown by the pilots at North Island. A flight demonstration team from Observation Squadron 2 at North Island flew DH-4Bs.

## 1924

Fatal airplane accidents took the lives of more naval aviators. A TS-1 mid-air collision in April got one; in August another died in a Curtiss JN crash on the Island; two died in an October mid-air collision over Coronado. Gunner Coles survived the collision, however. He became the first local pilot to save his life by hitting the silk, an automatic member of the Caterpillar Club.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1925

JANUARY/FEBRUARY - VF-2 pilots took their Vought VE-7s out to sea and qualified for carrier landings on LANGLEY. The carrier spent little time in port.

MARCH 1 - Bowlus painted Los Angeles-San Diego Airline on the two Ryan-Standards. Ryan bought a gross of tickets, placed some ads and arranged a terminal in Los Angeles. So began the first successful airline to run for more than a year in the United States.

APRIL 1 - Ryan sold a half interest in the business to Franklin Mahoney, an uneasy partnership from the beginning.

APRIL - Ryan borrowed a Jenny from San Diego Flying School to fly Gladys Roy over Sunset Cliffs during a real estate sales event. Gladys did a pull-off parachute jump, landing within 150 feet of the crowd.

APRIL - VF-1 pilots joined the battleship fleet with Curtiss TS-1 floatplanes from North Island. LANGLEY made a short cruise to Hawaii for spring maneuvers.

JUNE 25 - The San Diego city government put Ordinance No. 10035 in effect. It regulated aviation by creating a Board of Air Control, requiring airplanes to be inspected and marked, pilots to be tested, and stating where, and how flying could take place in the city.

AUGUST 20 - AROOSTOOK, GANNET, and LANGLEY got underway to be ready to help two PN-9 seaplane crews if they failed in a non-stop flight from San Francisco to Hawaii.

AUGUST - The Army Air Reserves held a two-week training camp at Rockwell Field with squadrons from as far as Seattle.

SEPTEMBER 1 - The Marines formed the 2nd Aviation Group at North Island, comprising the 1st and 8th Observation Squadrons and a new one, Fighter Squadron 3 flying Boeing FB-1s and old Vought VE-7s.

SEPTEMBER - Ryan bought the Douglas Cloudster, put in ten seats, and painted the airline name on it. Passengers remembered the luxury it afforded as the flagship of the Ryan airline fleet. Douglas built it to cross the continent nonstop.

OCTOBER 5 - The navy formed a utility squadron for target towing, liaison, and odd jobs. VJ-1 began flying the NB-1, PN-7, MO-1, and H-16; almost every odd plane on the Island.

NOVEMBER - The Tyce's organized the Chula Vista Aeronautic Club to interest people in buying lessons and flight time at their hangar on G Street. It didn't last long but it was the first flying club in the area.

1925

DECEMBER 2 - The 2nd Aviation Group scratched two VE-7s from their active airplane list when the Marine planes collided over San Diego bay killing both pilots.

DECEMBER - Jimmy Russell opened the Russell Parachute Company at 1202 Kettner.

DURING THE YEAR. New airplanes arriving for Navy fighter pilots included Boeing FB-2s and Curtiss F6C-1s. The observation squadrons got Vought UO-1s and placed them aboard cruisers like PHILADELPHIA (CL-41), and OMAHA (CL-4).

Navy pilot Tomlinson kept his personal Curtiss Jenny in his squadron hangar on North Island.

The huge letters SAN DIEGO appeared on the roof of the Broadway Pier, an aviators' guide.

San Diego Airport and Flying School at Dutch Flats had a Standard J, three Jennys, and a Nieuport 28. You paid twenty dollars per hour for instruction, and a $2.50 for a five-minute ride.

Frank Page called his business Page Aircraft, addressed at 1421 University. Of ten aircraft on hand, five were not set up yet, three were sold awaiting pick-up, one single-seater and one two-seater were set up. All the planes had LeRhone engines. A small building on Dutch Flats housed some Tommies for demonstration.

## 1926

JANUARY 14 - The year began with two deaths. A Vought UO from USS COLORADO lost a wing while stunting over San Diego and crashed into the bay.

FEBRUARY 14 - Claude Ryan flew the M-1, a new airplane of his company's design. By year's end, eighteen were built and sold to individuals and companies. Pacific Air Transport bought six.

FEBRUARY - Fleet Exercises began. The Marines stayed ashore. A twin-engined Martin joined the Marine DH-4s, JNs, and VE-7s.

MARCH 25 - Douglas Right-Way Corrigan soloed at Dutch Flats at the Ryan school.

MARCH - The NAS Flight Department prepared Loening OL seaplanes for a mapping expedition to Alaska.

MAY 29 - Margaret Williams, San Diego Flying School student, broke the long safety record at the Dutch Flats. She suffered serious injuries in a Jenny crash on the field.

JUNE 6 - Craziness. A Curtiss Eagle pulled a tug-of-war against an auto at the San Diego Beach.

JUNE - Torpedo plane pilots in VT-2 got Curtiss SC airplanes in the first half of the year.

JUNE - Nick Ciote assembled an airplane from a Vought fuselage, Jenny wings and a Hisso engine. Did it fly?

JUNE - Martin Jensen installed a big Wright J-2 radial engine on a Jenny and did some cross-country flying with his wife.

AUGUST 18 - The navy dropped a training plane by parachute over the Island, an experiment unrepeated here. It never caught on.

NOVEMBER 30 - Claude Ryan sold out to his partner, Mahoney, and became General Manager.

NOVEMBER - The Los Angeles-San Diego Airline broke even in the profit-loss columns. Ryan considered building a new type monoplan. The company ceased airline operations to concentrate on manufacturing airplanes.

DECEMBER - Mahoney used the Cloudster to haul beer up to Tijuana after the bridges washed out. Harrigan landed it in the surf in Baja one evening and lost it.

DURING THE YEAR. Seen at Rockwell Field were the DH-4B, Curtiss JNS, Douglas O-2C, S.E.5, and Thomas Morse MB-3A.

## 1926

DURING THE YEAR. The Immigration Service acquired a Vought Corsair from the Navy and used it in the battle against smugglers and bootleggers.

Hawley Bowlus helped some teenage boys build a primary glider. They flew it once on Point Loma.

Enlisted pilots trained to be fighter pilots in VF-2, the navy's only enlisted squadron until disbanded in the war.

Jimmy Hennessey built an airplane of his own design while he was a pilot for the San Diego Flying School.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1927

JANUARY 1 - The Department of Commerce Aeronautics Branch began enforcing the first federal regulations controlling civil aviation.

JANUARY - Ryan Airlines announced production of the Brougham, a five-place, high speed commercial transport.

JANUARY - Prudden-San Diego Airplane Company incorporated early in the year.

FEBRUARY 18 - Even some Marines left. VO-1 took their DH-4Bs to Nicaragua and came back in June.

FEBRUARY 25 - Charles Lindbergh signed a contract with Ryan Airlines for an airplane to be completed in 60 days. He entered the Orteig competition to fly nonstop from New York City to Paris, and win the $25,000 prize offered since 1919. The contest committee scheduled him for a May attempt.

FEBRUARY - Brown Airline established in San Diego at an Atlantic Street address (Pacific Highway in 1937). No history.

FEBRUARY - The fleet went to sea until May, leaving North Island fairly empty of pilots and planes.

APRIL 8 - Marine VF-3 put their Boeing FB-1s aboard HENDERSON for the long voyage to China.

APRIL 28 - The Ryan NYP Spirit of St. Louis made its first flight from Dutch Flats. Charles Lindbergh was the pilot.

APRIL - The Army tested the Fokker C-2, Bird of Paradise, at Rockwell Field before its flight from Oakland to Honolulu.

APRIL - Perhaps Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis was the first airplane licensed in San Diego, N-X-211: N for United States, X for Experimental, the 211th airplane licensed in the country.

MAY 10 - The Spirit left Rockwell Field for Paris and fame via St. Louis, and New York.

JUNE - Famous flyer Frank Hawks bought the first Ryan Brougham, named Pride of San Diego.

JUNE - Ryan Airlines completed one Brougham a week, with more customers than airplanes the rest of the year.

JULY 1 - Marine squadrons VF-3 and VO-1 changed their designation to VF-10M and VO-8M.

JULY 4 - Local stuntman pilot Frank Sheltz wingwalked in an Air Circus arranged by the Mission Beach management.

## 1927

JULY 4 - San Diego Flying School staged a Jenny Race on a 10-lap, four mile course around Dutch Flats. Marvel Crosson, San Diego pilot since the early twenties, entered her Jenny.

JULY 8 - The PN-10 crew set world records at San Diego.

JULY 15 - Ryan Airlines changed its name to B.F.Mahoney Aircraft Corporation.

JULY - Navy pilots took their planes to Ream Field and Otay Mesa to minimize air traffic at overcrowded North Island.

JULY - John Towers was Executive Officer of LANGLEY.

AUGUST - Mahoney finished a copy of the Ryan NYP for a Japanese company. ~~in the summer~~.

AUGUST - Federal inspector Jimmy Nall gave written pilot exams to San Diego aviators in a downtown hotel room. Federal regulalations superceded the local ordinance.

AUGUST - Claude Ryan established the Ryan Aeronautical Corporation next door to Mahoney Aircraft on Dutch Flats to distribute Ryan-Siemens engines, and operate an air passenger and express line.

AUGUST 10 - The Tremaine monoplane, a local entry in the Dole Race from Oakland to Hawaii, crashed on Point Loma killing the two-man crew, Navy Lieutenants Covell and Waggoner. Later the same day movie stuntman Eldon Honn drove his motorcycle off Torrey Pines cliff at 80 mph. After his parachute fouled on the motorcycle Honn ended his career before the cameras and on the rocks.

SEPTEMBER - Holy cats. Martin Jensen made the news. He tried to fly the MGM lion from San Diego to New York in a modified Ryan Brougham and crashed in Arizona. Both survived the publicity stunt.

OCTOBER 22 - Lindbergh returned, an international hero, landing the Spirit back home on Dutch Flats, one of the exciting stops on his flying tour of all forty-eight states.

OCTOBER - The new Prudden TM-1 finished its flight tests, the first all-metal trimotor built in San Diego.

OCTOBER - New school, Pacific Technical University, began teaching courses in aircraft building skills at 249 Kettner Boulevard(building presently used by Beardsley's Auto Body and Paint).

OCTOBER - Hopkins and Mead called their new plane, built in San Diego, the smallest monoplane in the world.

## 1927

NOVEMBER 15 - Ford trimotors began daily passenger trips(no mail) to San Diego from Los Angeles for Maddux Airlines. They landed at Dutch Flats, still a crowded, dusty field.

NOVEMBER 22 - Voters approved a $650,000 bond issue for municipal airport development of tidelands in San Diego bay to be named Lindbergh Field in 1928.

DURING THE YEAR - Training Squadron VN-7D11 flew Boeing NB and Consolidated NY trainers at North Island. "D11" stood for 11th Naval District.

Two local navy pilots, Darling and Sutton, joined the Caterpillar Club as they parachuted to safety.

Onlookers remember seeing two Marine DH-4Bs collide over Midway at Dutch Flats killing the four crewmen. As a three-plane formation flew towards the field, the two rear planes flew into each other and fell to the ground.

## AIRPLANES AT ROCKWELL FIELD IN 1927

| | |
|---|---|
| Boeing PW-9 | 25-297 |
| Boeing PW-9A | 26-351 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-128 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-129 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-130 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-132 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-133 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-135 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-136 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-137 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-138 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-139 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-140 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-141 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-142 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-143 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-144 |
| Condolidated PT-1 | 27-145 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-146 |
| Consolidated PT-1 | 27-147 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Curtiss JNS | 25-19 |
| Curtiss JNS | 25-20 |
| Curtiss JNS | 25-22 |
| Curtiss JNS | 25-23 |
| Curtiss JNS | 25-26 |
| Curtiss JNS | 25-30 |
| Curtiss JNS | 25-35 |
| Curtiss JNS | 25-191 |
| Curtiss JNS | 38089 |
| Curtiss JNS | 45284 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Douglas C-1C | 27-205 |
| Douglas C-1C | 27-206 |
| Douglas C-1C | 27-207 |
| Douglas C-1C | 27-208 |
| Douglas C-1C | 27-211 |
| Douglas C-1C | 27-212 |
| Douglas COA-1 | 25-233 |
| Douglas O-2A | 25-398 |
| Douglas O-2C | 26-400 |
| Douglas O-2C | 26-417 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| DH-4M-1 | 24300 | DH-4M-1 | 32932 |
| DH-4M-1 | 30517 | DH-4M-1 | 32957 |
| DH-4M-1 | 31200 | DH-4M-2P | 31231 |
| DH-4M-1 | 31262 | | |
| DH-4M-1 | 31265 | | |
| DH-4M-1 | 31498 | | |
| DH-4M-1 | 32578 | | |

## 1928

JANUARY - The landlord of the ex-fish cannery rented by the B.F.Mahoney Aircraft Corporation for a factory sued for one thousand dollars back rent. Mahoney announced his decision to move to St. Louis.

JANUARY - Maddux Airline sold local scenic flights from Dutch Flats in addition to its daily San Diego-Los Angeles service.

FEBRUARY 28 - Mahoney changed his mind about moving to St. Louis and paid his back rent. Instead he decided to double production.

FEBRUARY - Ex-Marine Archie Atherton opened a parachute school.

FEBRUARY - Navy squadrons joined the fleet for annual spring exercises.

FEBRUARY - TRACY (DD214), a four-stack destroyer, began plane guard duty, trailing the aircraft carrier LANGLEY, ready to rescue luckless aviators from a watery grave, a requirement for destroyers ever since.

FEBRUARY - The new Bird Air Bus, a single engine monoplane with an airfoil-shaped fuselage built in San Diego, crashed in Old Town and killed all five occupants including Mr. Bird on its first test flight.

MARCH 21 - The new aircraft carrier, SARATOGA (CV-3), into port and anchored in Coronado Roads because the bay was too shallow. Marc Mitscher was Air Officer.

APRIL - The Mahoney company gave Lindbergh a new Ryan Brougham.

APRIL - Tomlinson, a member of the Sea Hawks exhibition team in VF-6B, performed six outside loops over the Island, three up and three down. In May the brass banned outside loops and delayed parachute jumps.

MAY 1 - The T.C.Ryan Flying School opened in a new 5000 square foot hangar at Dutch Flats. Its slogan " To produce the nation's finest pilots."

MAY 24 - Mexican Emilio Carranza flew a RCan Brougham from San Diego to Mexico City.

MAY - Pacific Technical University, the first aircraft university in Southern California, opened at 2119 Kettner(an automobile repair shop in 1985).

JUNE 1 - The flight line at Rockwell Field got crowded. Keystone bombers from the 11th Bombing Squadron and Curtiss P-1Bs from the 95th Pursuit Squadron arrived for two years duty.

## 1928

JUNE 8 - Schoenhair and Tucker attempted a nonstop flight from San Diego to New York in their Lockheed Vega but landed in Ohio instead.

JUNE - Roy Campbell applied to the City Council for a choice location on Lindbergh Field for the San Diego Air Service Corporation. Field construction neared completion.

JUNE - The City Council placed Lindbergh Field under full control of the Harbor Commission. San Diego Air Service got a five-year lease.

JULY 11 - The National Reliability Air Tour arrived in San Diego. The planes attracted crowds to Dutch Flats.

JULY - The Department of Commerce licensed the Airtech Flying School, part of the San Diego Air Service at Lindbergh Field.

JULY - Earl Prudden joined the Ryan company sales department. He could sell ice boxes to Eskimos.

JULY - City Ordinance 11829 became effective, naming Lindbergh Field and placing it under the control of the Harbor Commission. Charles Walsh' daughter wrote the city and asked that the name be changed to Walsh Field since he built the first plane in the first factory here in 1909. The city said no, but we'll name the second one after him. They never did.

AUGUST 16 - Over 50,000 people dedicated Lindbergh Field. Almost three hundred Army and Navy planes performed, including the Army Three Musketeers and Navy Seahawks. Three enlisted sailors jumped from a Ryan Brougham, using Russell lobe parachutes, the first triple jump from a commercial airplane. Mayor Clark arrived in the first plane to land, an Army PT-1 flown by Councilman Frank Seifert, an Army Reserve pilot.

AUGUST - The other new aircraft carrier, LEXINGTON (CV-2), arrived just before the Lindbergh Field dedication. LEX and SARA impressed onlookers with their 880-foot hulls and distinctive silhouettes. And no doubt increased recruitment and application for wedding licenses.

SEPTEMBER 29 - Brock and Schlee completed a fifty-nine hour endurance flight over San Diego in their Bellanca monoplane.

SEPTEMBER - San Diego Air Service's white hangar got the finishing touches. Soon there were two Travel Airs, a gas truck, and Chief Pilot Doug Kelley. The office was in a building across Atlantic Street (Pacific Highway in 1937).

SEPTEMBER - Frank Page sold some Thomas Morse Scouts to the producers of the movie Hell's Angels.

1928

SEPTEMBER - Other aviation businesses included Mission Bay Airport run by Koehler and Tangren, and Miles Rombough's School of Flying at Dutch Flats. Rombough learned to fly at North Island in 1918.

SEPTEMBER - The Prudden XM-1 completed a test flight at Lindbergh Field; first all-metal tri-motored cabin monoplane built here.

SEPTEMBER - Mahoney test-flew a single-seat monoplane with a flying tail designed by Hall and Schult.

NOVEMBER 8 - A flying student and a friend stunted in a Midway Airport plane. ~~After~~ leveling out upside down after a stunt the pilot's safety belt broke and he dropped into San Diego bay. The other died in the crashlanding upside down in the water. ? ? ?

NOVEMBER - Mahoney moved his general offices to St.Louis, and planned building airplanes in both places.

DECEMBER - Hawley Bowlus, superintendent of technical instruction at Airtech, held a meeting of 50 people interested in gliding. Bowlus displayed his new glider.

DECEMBER - Ryan Field at Dutch Flats was designated as the Port of Entry for San Diego.

DECEMBER - Richfield Oil Company built a 125-foot beacon tower in Palm City, the southernmost of a chain to Canada to aid night-flying. They lighted it before Christmas.

DECEMBER - A powerful lamp was installed on the San Diego Trust and Savings Bank tower aimed at Lindbergh Field, and soon called a "finger of light."

DURING THE YEAR - Dick Williams opened Midway Airport on Dutch Flats with two Travel Airs and a Waco OXX-6, teaching 18 students in the Midway School of Aviation.

In addition to those already related, aircraft accidents included one Army and two Navy fatalities, and four other fatalities in three crashes. USN LT Parker parachuted once; LT Gaines parachuted twice.

## 1929

JANUARY 1-7 The Army's Fokker C-2A Question Mark set an endurance record of 150 hours. It took off in Los Angeles, and refueled over San Diego from a Rockwell Field airplane. Mutt and Jeff stayed up four days in their comic strip endurance flight in the San Diego Union.

JANUARY 12 - The fleet held annual spring exercises and eleven San Diego squadrons, more than 200 airplanes, joined LEXINGTON and SARATOGA, while LANGLEY left for overhaul.

JANUARY - Bowlus test-flew his Model 16 at Lindbergh Field.

JANUARY - New York Telegram called Lindbergh Field the "shrine of the flying world."

JANUARY - The movie Wings showed at the Egyptian Theater on Park at University Avenue.

JANUARY - Erickson the Flying Photographer had a downtown address and owned a Fairchild 71, and a J-1 Ryan Brougham.

JANUARY - The city amended the Ordinance regulating aircraft to include gliding operations.

FEBRUARY 24 - Millionaire Whitney landed his Sikorsky S-38 at Lindbergh Field, then drove down to the races in TJ; largest plane on the field, yet.

FEBRUARY - Prudden company sold TM-1 to Beacon Airways.

MARCH - Pickwick Airways leased land on Lindbergh Field and began San Diego-Los Angeles service in March with three Bach trimotors. Maddux Airline increased their Ford Trimotor service over the same route to three planes a day the same month.

MARCH - San Diego offered the Navy 1000 acres of Camp Kearny for an airship base.

APRIL 21 - Maddux lost a Ford Trimotor in a mid-air collision with a stunting Army pursuit plane over East San Diego. All five in the Ford died in the crash. The Army pilot's chute caught on his plane. He died, too.

MAY - San Diego Air Service bought a Warner Travel Air and a J-5 Ryan Brougham and offered aerial taxi service to any place in the United States in the Brougham.

MAY - The Department of Commerce aeronautical inspector spent a day at Lindbergh Field inspecting pilots and airplanes for federal licenses. He did it again in July. A large number of Army and Navy personnel got pilot and mechanic licenses.

## 1929

MAY - Ryan bought Mahoney Airport, hangars, seven aircraft and equipment for his school, giving him 150 acres, 16 airplanes and 20 employees.

MAY 15 - GANNET (AM-41) went to Alaska with three Navy Loening OL-8s for another mapping mission. LCDR Radford was O-IN-C.

JUNE - Airtech installed lights on the Camp Kearny field for training students.

SUMMER. Doug Kelley led a Travel Air squadron of Airtech students to Los Angeles every Saturday.

JUNE 11 - Tailspin Tommy cartoonist Hal Forrest, President of the National Aeronautical League, landed at Lindbergh Field on a national tour to make America air-minded.

JUNE 24 - USN LT Clyde got lucky that night. His plane got in an inverted spin over Point Loma. He jumped, hit the wing and broke his shoulder blade. Three hours and 12 minutes later rescuers found him floating in the water, alive.

JUNE - Prudden-San Diego Aircraft Company became Solar Aircraft Company; building an 8-place cabin plane.

JUNE - Two 95th Pursuit Squadron pilots joined the Caterpillar Club after colliding in mid-air.

JUNE - Western Air Express began flying chartered Fokker F-10s between Los Angeles, San Diego and Agua Caliente on weekends.

JUNE - Navy T4M and F2B pilots conducted Field Carrier Landing Practice at Border Field (now a State Park).

JUNE - Russell Parachute Company, busy with government contracts, expanded their factory space. Company jumpers leaped from a rented Ryan Brougham over Otay Mesa to test chutes.

JUNE - Pickwick Airways began night-coach service from Lindbergh Field. Passengers loaded from buses in front of the Airtech hangar. There was no terminal.

JULY 4 - Hawley Bowlus won the Pacific Coast Glider Contest held at Mt. Soledad, with his Model 16.

JULY - The Department of Commerce gave Airtech the first license on the West Coast for training all classes of pilots; also approved Pacific Technical University as ground school for training transport, limited commercial and private pilots.

## 1929

AUGUST 18 - Goodyear blimp Volunteer visited Ryan Field. American Legion conventioneers got rides. It berthed in North Island's blimp hangar overnight.

AUGUST - 6000 passengers arrived and departed Ryan Field along Barnett Avenue in 390 airliners plus other planes during the month. By year's end, 5000 trimotor transport landings were recorded. Ryan students from eight countries made 80 daily flights using fifteen airplanes.

AUGUST - San Diego Board of Air Control stopped flying over Balboa Park during Sunday afternoon concerts.

AUGUST - Reuben Fleet, president of Consolidated Aircraft Corporation in Buffalo, New York, offered to buy one-year-old Lindbergh Field for one million dollars.

SEPTEMBER 1 - Another Pacific Coast Glider Meet took place on Mt. Soledad, with twelve gliders entered. Bowlus won distance and endurance prizes.

SEPTEMBER 16 - Marvel Crosson, from Chula Vista, flew her new Travel Air from Ryan field to enter the first women's transcontinental air race in the United States, from Los Angeles to Cleveland. The lady died in a crash during the race.

SEPTEMBER - Hell's Angels moviemakers kept their airplanes at Ryan Field. The big twin-engined Sikorsky biplane came complete with Maltese crosses.

SEPTEMBER - Airtech ordered 10 Fleet biplanes.

SEPTEMBER - Continental Air Express began San Diego-Los Angeles service with Lockheed Vegas.

OCTOBER - Bowlus exceeded the Wright brothers 1911 gliding record in the United States - 14 minutes, 16 seconds. His flight from Lindbergh Field lasted for 1 hour, 21 minutes.

OCTOBER 15 - Pilots could receive radio broadcasts from the Department of Commerce station.

NOVEMBER 17 - Ruth Alexander,24, set a women's altitude record in a Barling NB-3 from Ryan Airport. She learned to fly two months before at the same place.

NOVEMBER - San Diego Air Service Corporation changed its name to Airtech Flying Service, Ltd; also bought a new Monocoupe.

NOVEMBER - The Bowlus Sailplane Company went into business manufacturing sailplanes at 1200 W. Juniper.

## 1929

NOVEMBER - Fourteen planes of the California Air Tour visited Ryan Airport; fueled and took off. Waldo Waterman flew a Bach trimotor.

NOVEMBER - Western Air Express began daily San Diego-Los Angeles service with Fokker F-10 airliners from Lindbergh Field.

DECEMBER 10 - Bowlus set a new American glider endurance record over Point Loma of 2 hours, 47 minutes. The world record was over eight hours.

DECEMBER 12 - Maddux Airline merged with TAT, bringing Ford Trimotors marked TAT-Maddux into town. The first one left San Diego at 8:20am on a transcontinental daily service - 48 hours to New York City.

DURING THE YEAR - Port Director Brennan took the deckhouse off a tug, and used it at Lindbergh Field as a passenger terminal. For protection from rain and prop blast passengers walked under a walled canopy which rolled up to the airplane door from the terminal.

K & O Aircraft Company owned a Jenny at Dutch Flats. Ortlieb and Thomas rented an airport at Dutch Flats for their two airplanes. Down in Otay Bob Jaquot started the Grande Vista Airport with a Swallow and a Jenny.

Seventeen people lost their lives in airplane accidents. Seven were Navy or Marine aviators. Three were mid-air collisions. The Chamber of Commerce Aviation Committee conferred and recommended no strict airlanes above the city.

## 1930

JANUARY 13 - Bowlus set another national gliding record from Point Loma, 6 hours 19 minutes. He beat his own record of 5 hours, 27 minutes a few days before.

JANUARY - Lindbergh visited San Diego. He flew the Solar MS-1, then learned to fly a Bowlus glider off Point Loma, and bought one.

FEBRUARY 23 - Bowlus set another endurance record from Point Loma, 9 hours 5 minutes.

FEBRUARY - Anne Lindbergh flew a Bowlus off Mt. Soledad. She became the first licensed woman glider pilot in the country. The same month local ladies formed the Anne Lindbergh Gliders, and Bowlus built them a glider, Good Ship Anne.

FEBRUARY - Another gliding club, the Western Flyers, formed about this time. The Lindberghs attracted people to aviation everywhere they went.

FEBRUARY - Navy ships, planes and pilots left for exercises.

FEBRUARY - The Tyce School of Aviation began in Chula Vista.

MARCH 30 - Frank Hawks flew a towed Franklin glider from Lindbergh Field to New York.

APRIL 1 - Jack Barstow set a new gliding record at Point Loma with a flight of 15 hours 13 minutes.

APRIL 4 - Lindbergh Field got an A-1-A rating from the Department of Commerce, the highest rating.

MAY - The 95th Pursuit Squadron flew new Boeing P-12s in formation to new altitude records, even causing vapor trails - a new phenomenon. The 11th Bomb Squadron began getting new bombers, Curtiss B-2 Condors.

MAY - Pickwick Airways ceased operations.

JUNE 1 - The first air mail left San Diego by airplane in a Western Air Express Fokker Trimotor on a new route through Los Angeles and Salt Lake City.

JUNE 15 - Pacific Air Transport began San Diego-Los Angeles-Seattle service with Boeing B-40 mail and passenger planes at 10 pm with a nine Navy plane escort. PAT became United Air Lines before the year ended.

JUNE 17 - Brock and Schlee set a cross-country record between San Diego and Jacksonville, Florida in a Lockheed Vega.

1930

JUNE 24 - RADM Reeves took command of Aircraft Squadrons Battle Force, a dynamic officer striving to improve naval aviation.

JUNE 22 - Peaches Wallace, popular local lady aviator, died after an operation. Friends named the glider port at Emerald Hills Golf Course for her.

JUNE - After the ~~St. Louis plant~~ Curtiss plant at St. Louis closed Airtech assembled four Curtiss CW-6 airplanes from parts (formerly Travel Air 6000)

JULY 4 - Bowlus Sailplane Company closed; no sales.

JULY 11 - Ruth Alexander set an altitude record of 26,600 feet over the city in her Barling NB-3.

SEPTEMBER - Ruth Alexander flew her Barling from Vancouver, Canada to Agua Caliente. Before the month ended she attempted a one-stop flight from Lindbergh Field to Newark, New Jersey. Her Barling dove out of the overcast near Plumosa Park, in Loma Portal, and ended her life on the 18th.

SEPTEMBER - Sailors formed the Bluejackets Flying Club at Airtech (at least one member lived in San Diego in 1982).

SEPTEMBER - The Ryan company got a new name: T.C.Ryan Aeronautical Corporation.

OCTOBER 25 - TAT-Maddux and Western Air Express merged to form Transcontinental and Western Air, Inc. Western Air Express continued its Salt Lake City-San Diego service.

DECEMBER - Gilpin Air Line began San Diego-Los Angeles service with Bach trimotors bought from defunct Pickwick Airways.

DECEMBER - USS AROOSTOOK, a familiar ship since 1920, left San Diego to be decommissioned in 1931.

DURING THE YEAR. Gliding attracted dozens of people. Eight glider clubs built 11 primary, 6 secondary, and 8 sailplanes; the high school club made 12 gliders. Enthusiasts built an amphibious and a seaplane glider. One club met at Chula Vista Airport (Tyce's) in the morning from 4 to 8 am.

The Ryan school flew several kinds of airplanes: Standard J-1, Waco, DH Moth, Ryan M-2 and the Jenny.

Solar found no buyers for their MS-1 despite two cross-country promotion flights, ~~until a Mexican company bought it~~. The depression was real.

## 1930

DURING THE YEAR. Navy pilots flew faster, heavier, larger airplanes like the Boeing F4B-1 fighter, Martin T4M-1 torpedo plane, and PN-12 flying boat. Their training consisted of countless field landings, test hops, tactics, ferrying, blind flying, torpedo runs, bombing, gunnery, radio and navigation practice.

Twelve Naval aviators joined the Caterpillar Club, one mid-air collision, three glider crashes, and four fatalities ended in fifteen accidents. 1931 would seem less dangerous.

## 1931

FEBRUARY - Naval aviation went to sea for three months of annual fleet exercises.

FEBRUARY - The courts found Russell Parachute Company guilty of patent infringement in a suit brought by Irvin and Floyd Smith companies.

MARCH - Theodore Gildred, San Diego millionaire, flew a Ryan B-5 Brougham from San Diego to Quito, Ecuador, a goodwill flight. (His son, Ted, duplicated the flight fifty years later in a Stinson.)

APRIL 1 - The Navy reorganized the fleet. Aircraft Squadrons Battle Fleet became Aircraft, Battle Force.

APRIL - The Marines decommissioned VO-10M, giving the Curtiss OC-2s to VO-8M, the other observation squadron on the Island.

APRIL - LANGLEY joined the Scouting Force with VF-3's FU-1 fighters, and VS-1's O2U scouts.

APRIL - Pacific Air Transport leased land at Lindbergh Field and built a hangar, later the United Air Line hangar.

APRIL - The Solar MS-1 sold to Compania Aeronautical del Sur and may have carried coffee until its loss in 1932.

MAY 28 - PAT started a Seattle-San Diego service with Ford Trimotors, called the Daylight Flyer.

MAY - It cost $7.75 to ride a Western Air Express Fokker one way to Los Angeles; round trip five per cent less. If you rode PAT's Boeing 40 it was ten bucks.

MAY - One of the Navy's three autogiros visited North Island. The Pitcairn XOP-1 landed on LANGLEY in June.

MAY - After a Fokker crash in Kansas in March, the Department of Commerce grounded all Fokker F-10/10A airplanes because of faulty wings. It affected Western Air Express' local service.

JUNE 19 - James Hall flew his Lockheed Altair from Vancouver, B.C. to Agua Caliente in 7 hours 48 minutes, a new record.

JUNE 30 - Lindbergh Field became the Port of Entry from Mexico. Immigration officials moved their office from Ryan Airport.

JUNE - Airtech airplanes included Fleets, Travel Air 4000, Ryan Brougham, and a Curtiss Robin.

JULY 5 - Century-Pacific Lines started San Diego-Los Angeles airline service flying Stinsons with rates below the train fare. It started a rate war with Gilpin.

## 1931

AUGUST - Despite the effort of important people in town, the Navy used Sunnyvale for a West Coast lighter-than-air base instead of San Diego.

OCTOBER - At the annual Navy Day program parachutists jumped from a Ford RR-2, the navy version of the trimotor.

NOVEMBER 7 - SARATOGA entered San Diego bay the first time.

NOVEMBER - After training in San Diego VS-14M and VS-15M joined their navy partners on SARATOGA and LEXINGTON. It was the first sea duty for Marine pilots.

DURING THE YEAR. Federal monies financed dredging the harbor and adding 122 acres to Lindbergh Field.

Solar Aircraft quit building airplanes and became a "pioneer in the field of sub-contracting,"( a title bestowed later). They just tried to keep out of the red.

Moviemakers made Hell Divers at North Island.

The Army reduced flight time for pursuit pilots to 220 flying hours per year, making unhappy members of the 95th Pursuit Squadron at Rockwell Field. Those with civil licenses flew many hours on their own time.

2 LT Tom Scott, P-12 pilot with the 95th at Rockwell Field, got a civil transport license to join Western Air Express, but changed his mind. (BGEN Scott and his San Diego bride live in Ja Jolla and are parents of Astronaut David Scott.)

In addition to Lindbergh Field, Dutch Flats, Tyce, and Grande Vista, several other airports served San Diego pilots by 1931, however it is uncertain which year they began: Linda Vista Airport, Border Air Service Field (also called Beyer Field) in San Ysidro, La Jolla Airport, and Valley Airport between National City and Chula Vista (later National City Airport).

Tyce School of Aviation used the Lincoln PTK, Fleet, and an Aeronca C-3. At Linda Vista Airport Clarence Prescott had a Buhl Pup, OX5 Waco, and Inland Sport.

The Border Patrol arrested a bootlegger on Kearny Mesa. They requisitioned his Ryan Brougham for use a a Patrol airplane for several years.

One Marine pilot lost his life in March. Three Navy pilots parachuted to safety: one each in October, November and December. Aviation in San Diego was safer than the year before.

## 1932

FEBRUARY - Navy squadrons got underway with the fleet and returned early in April.

APRIL - GANNET (AM-41) left San Diego for Alaska to service the mapping expedition with VJ-1's OL-8s.

APRIL - Century-Pacific Airline stopped service to San Diego.

APRIL - LAMBERTON (AG-21), old four-stacker DD-119, towed aircraft targets in the area until 1940. STODDERT (DD-302) became a bomb and torpedo target until December.

MAY 11 - While the new arrival, Navy dirigible USS AKRON, flew over the city, thousands watched little fighters emerge from its belly and head for North Island. As AKRON moored to the mast erected on old Camp Kearny, a water ballast bag broke. Instantly lighter, the dirigible rose with three sailors on the groundhandling team still holding their rope. Two fell to their death, the third survived.

JULY - LEXINGTON (CV-2) left for the East Coast taking VF-5B, VF-2B, VS-3B and VT-1B, making a lot more room in the traffic pattern.

JULY 28 - As 315 Army and Navy planes flew over Lindbergh Field the Harbor Department dedicated the Administration Building financed by Claude Ryan. The Spanish-style building had class rooms, aircraft showroom in lobby, Department of Commerce, weather bureau, teletype service, customs, cafe, ticket office and a barber shop. Across the street a gas station sold Rocket Gasoline, eight gallons for a dollar.

AUGUST - Reserve members of the 514th Observation Squadron at Rockwell Field went to Long Beach Airport for the annual two-week training camp.

OCTOBER - American Airways agreed to fly Fokker trimotors on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday from San Diego to El Paso if the Post Office guaranteed fifty pounds of mail. The Aviation Committee of the Chamber of Commerce began mailing bricks.

NOVEMBER - After fog blanketed North Island United Air Line pilot Sullivan guided twelve USN single-seaters to a safe landing at Camp Kearny.

DURING THE YEAR - To North Island plane captains fell the task of placing a two-wheel dolly under the tailskid and running along with the plane when the pilot taxied on the concrete apron to and from the take-off area. It required ~~an~~ olympic effort to keep up.

Five men died in flying accidents during the year; one walked into a propeller aboard LANGLEY. Six men parachuted safely.

## 1933

FEBRUARY - Fleet exercises began. LANGLEY and SARATOGA took the squadrons to sea to fight War Problem 14 - attack the West Coast. Fighter squadrons flew the F4B, FF-1, F11C, and BFC-2; Scout squadrons had the OJ-2, SUs, O2U, and OL-9; VT-2B drove TG-1 and TG-2 torpedo bombers. VJ-5, a utility outfit, had the Sikorsky RS-3, PS-3 and Loening OL-9.

APRIL - Reuben Fleet, President of Consolidated Aircraft Corporation in Buffalo, New York, visited San Diego to consider the offer of land on Lindbergh Field for his factory.

MAY - Consolidated chose San Diego. Thanks to the work of T.C. Macaulay and Tom Bomar on the Chamber of Commerce, San Diego became an industrial center.

MAY - The Ryan school began using an American Marchetti S.56 seaplane for training at Lindbergh Field, rolling off the ramp beyond the tuna docks.

AUGUST 8 - Milo Burcham flew a Fleet upside down from San Diego to Los Angeles in 1 hour, 47 minutes, a new world record, which didn't last long.

SEPTEMBER - A local aural radio range beacon at the north end of Lindbergh Field began broadcasting "A" and "N" beams. It enabled pilots to home in on the field as they approached San Diego.

OCTOBER - VP-10F flew their six P2Y-1s to San Diego from the Canal Zone.

NOVEMBER 16 - MACON (ZRS-5) did its first fly-over San Diego.

DECEMBER 8 - Marine aviation in San Diego changed from Aircraft Squadrons, West Coast Expeditionary Force to Aircraft Two, Fleet Marine Force.

DURING THE YEAR - Rockwell Field laid out a circular and well-oiled landing area as required on all Army fields.

Army Air Reserve members of the 514th O.S. flew the BT-2A, O-19B and a PT-3A on weekend training hops, shooting at tow targets, practicing reconnaissance and formation flying.

McClure crashed a plane near Lindbergh Field in February; nobody hurt. In November, Navy Chief Aviation Pilot Brown parachuted safely, and LT Hart died after a mid-air collision.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1934

FEBRUARY 9 - USS MACON (ZRS-5) moored at Camp Kearny.

FEBRUARY - Gilpin Air Lines stopped operations.

APRIL - United Air Line began Boeing 247 service into Lindbergh Field.

MAY 26 - T.C.Ryan Aeronautical changed its name to Ryan Aeronautical Company. Next name change was in 1968.

MAY - General Air Lines, Western Air Express under another name, began flying airmail between San Diego and Salt Lake City in Boeing 40-B airplanes.

MAY - LANGLEY, LEXINGTON, and SARATOGA got underway for Panama with the Navy squadrons from North Island, for six months. Airplanes included F4B-4, SF-1, FF-1, SU-1, TG-2, BFC-1, O2U, BM-1, and OJ-2s on the cruisers.

JUNE 8 - John Fornasero piloted the new Ryan S-T on its first flight from Lindbergh Field.

JUNE 23 - San Diegoan Mrs.G. Williams, black parachutist, jumped from 2,500 feet over Tyce Airport. The wind blew her into the bay where she ~~was in danger of drowning~~ almost did before ~~being~~ rescued.

JUNE 30 - John Towers became Commanding Officer of NAS San Diego.

JULY 18 - USS WRIGHT (AV-1) left San Diego for Alaska with VP-7F and VP-9F PM-1s, and planes from VJ-1F and VJ-2F; returned in September.

SEPTEMBER - The Ryan School of Aeronautics recently graduated fifteen students, six transport, two private, one amateur, and six mechanics licenses.

SEPTEMBER - K & T Flying Service at Chula Vista moved to Honolulu with a Ford trimotor; Charles Knox and Robert Tyce.

NOVEMBER - Twenty-two lady pilots of the 99's participated in a two-day Los Angeles-San Diego-Los Angeles flight as part of the All Women's Air Tour.

NOVEMBER - General Air Lines began using the new Douglas DC-2 airliner at Lindbergh Field.

NOVEMBER - The Chamber of Commerce began a campaign for a ten million dollar Army Air Base at San Diego, one of twenty proposed by a Congressman.

## 1934

NOVEMBER - Barnstormer Arnold Peik arrived in San Diego with his Stinson, camped at Lindbergh Field a couple weeks, then became a squatter beside Mission Bay on Anna Street. He cleared an 800 foot strip beside his house trailer and began selling flight instruction.

DECEMBER 9 - Sanford Baldwin, a student, piloted the original Ryan S-T to a fatal crash on the mudflat by Lindbergh Field.

DURING THE YEAR - Arnett Speer started a flying service at Dutch Flats that lasted until the war began.

## 1935

JANUARY 1 - Western Air Express reverted to its old name (see May 1934) flying Boeing 247s to Salt Lake City and back.

JANUARY - Bob Jacquot began spraying celery farms in Chula Vista with a modified Ryan Brougham, perhaps a first for San Diego.

MARCH - Three Curtiss XF9C-2s arrived at North Island. MACON, their "mother ship," lay on the ocean bottom off Point Sur.

MARCH 28 - Enroute from Miami to Alameda, the Pan American Clipper, a Sikorsky S-42, landed in San Diego bay.

March 31 - Ryan delivered the first production S-T to a Seattle customer, first of 316 airplanes.

APRIL 14 - USS RANGER (CV-4) arrived in San Diego the first time. She was the first ship in the Navy built from the keel up as an aircraft carrier. The four squadrons aboard were VF-3B, VB-3B, VB-5B, and VS-1B with a total of 100 airplanes, from F2F fighters to JF utility planes.

APRIL - The Harbor Commission decided to operate Lindbergh Field as a night/day airport and maintain a flying boat base there.

APRIL - A team from Consolidated Aircraft arrived to direct construction of the new plant on Lindbergh Field, 1000 X 275 feet.

MAY 29 - The California Pacific International Exposition opened in Balboa Park. All the flying services made money - $2.50 for a sightseeing trip over the Park.

MAY - Ensenada Air Line began service from San Diego with two cabin planes.

MAY - LANGLEY, LEXINGTON, SARATOGA, RANGER, and WRIGHT squadrons left North Island for exercises in the northeast Pacific until June.

JUNE 1 - The Battle Force commissioned VS-4B. Their first of eleven airplanes, a Vought SU-4, arrived at the blimp hangar. The squadron eventually joined VF-1B's F4B-4s aboard LANGLEY.

JUNE - Doug Kelley and Claude Ryan were pilots in the County Sheriff's volunteer squadron.

JUNE - Speer Airport on Barnett Avenue got a new hangar with floodlights for night flying.

JULY - Los Angeles Airways began airline service between Agua Caliente-Lindbergh Field-Long Beach-Los Angeles using trimotors.

## 1935

JULY 30 - LT Akers made the first blind landing aboard an aircraft carrier, LANGLEY, after taking off North Island in a Berliner-Joyce OJ-2 under a hooded cockpit.

AUGUST - The Navy massed 416 airplanes in a flyover of San Diego, La Jolla and the Admiral's flagship, USS PENNSYLVANIA.

AUGUST - San Diego pilot Grace Prescott won first place in the Ruth Chatterton Sportsman Pilot Trophy Race at the National Air Races.

SEPTEMBER - Consolidated Aircraft started production at Lindbergh Field with an Army contract for 50 pursuit planes, the two-seater PB-2A with a supercharged engine.

SEPTEMBER - The Treasury Department accepted a 500 X 1000 foot area at Lindbergh Field for a new Coast Guard Air Patrol Station.

OCTOBER 20 - Consolidated Aircraft Corporation dedicated its new factory on Lindbergh Field along Atlantic Avenue.

OCTOBER 5 - Rockwell Field became the Navy's South Field the day most of the Army left North Island. The Air Reserve officers in the 514th O.S. persuaded Lindbergh Field Manager Joe Brennan, the Air Corps, and Congressmen to move the squadron to Lindbergh Field. A WPA project began erecting the first of two hangars in November, on the east side of the field near Laurel and Atlantic Avenue (later Pacific Highway). They housed a Consolidated PT-3 and two Thomas Morse O-19Bs.

NOVEMBER 10 - A Martin M-130 Clipper flew over Balboa Park past the Ford Building on its way to a landing in the bay.

DECEMBER - A WPA Project got the funds to add a 4000-foot runway at Lindbergh Field to accommodate new Consolidated airplanes.

DECEMBER - The Douglas XTBD-1 arrived at North Island for carrier qualification trials on LEXINGTON. The new torpedo planes with folding wings went to war in 1942.

DURING THE YEAR - Flying fatalities totaled six in three crashes. Two men died stunting a Great Lakes trainer too close to San Diego bay. Jacquot's Brougham clipped a high tension wire while he was crop-spraying. The wire electrocuted an 11-year old boy.

## 1936

JANUARY 15 - Consolidated completed the first airplane in their new plant on Lindbergh Field, a PB-2A, two-seat pursuit monoplane. The Air Corps bought fifty each.

JANUARY 16 - WRIGHT (AV-1), GANNET (AVP-8), TEAL (AM-23), and LAPWING (AM-1) got underway for South American waters to tend the seaplanes of VP-2F, VP-3F and VP-5F, based at Coco Solo.

JANUARY - The fifty men and women in the Aviation Committee of the Chamber of Commerce met the second Friday of each month at the Lindbergh Field Cafe; same date since 1927.

FEBRUARY 12 - The California Pacific International Exposition opened in Balboa Park. The former Ford Building housed the March of Transportation exhibit which included a Ryan ST, Consolidated PB-2A, Curtiss BF2C (both suspended) and the Bowlus Model A sailplane Anne Lindbergh soloed at Mt. Soledad in 1930.

FEBRUARY - Consolidated also built four A-11s, look-alike PB-2As, for the Air Corps.

APRIL - Twenty members formed the Mesa Flying Club(still flying in 1985, now San Diego Flying Club, the oldest club in town) with a Taylor J-2 Cub using Linda Vista Airport, nine miles north of San Diego on the Inland Highway. Clarence Prescott owned L.V.Airport.

APRIL - The Queen of the Nudists flew from San Diego to Newark, and made it, but just barely.

APRIL - Consolidated started expanding their plant by 200,000 square feet to build P3Y patrol planes (later designated PBY).

MAY 14 - The first three Consolidated PB-2As left San Diego for Selfridge Field in Michigan, piloted by the customers, three Air Corps officers. One of them, Major Ralph Royce, learned to fly at North Island in 1916.

JULY 18 - Flying a Ryan S-T, Peter Dana broke the junior trans-continental record in 23 hours, 37 minutes elapsed time, a new record for aircraft under 1200 pounds.

JULY - The Navy gave Consolidated a $4,898,000 contract for fifty PBY seaplanes.

AUGUST 30 - The Goodyear blimp made a two-day goodwill visit.

AUGUST - Douglas Corrigan left San Diego for St. Louis in his Curtiss Robin.

## 1936

SEPTEMBER 15. Familiar sight in the harbor for twelve years, LANGLEY (CV-1) left town for conversion to seaplane tender, no longer needed as an experimental aircraft carrier.

SEPTEMBER 25 - Reuben Fleet, and Laddon explored the feasibility of launching seaplanes from cars on railway tracks. Test pilot Wheatley successfully flew a Fleet biplane from a railway handcar in Chula Vista.

SEPTEMBER - Consolidated established a "Truck Drivers School" for PBY pilots.

SEPTEMBER - WRIGHT (AV-1) departed for Alaska and serviced 40 seaplanes of VP-7F, VP-9F, VP-12F, VP-14F, VJ-1F, and VJ-2F.

SEPTEMBER - Famous visitors to San Diego and Consolidated Aircraft Corporation included Vincent Bendix, Amelia Earhart, Alexander de Seversky, and C.R.Smith, President of American Airlines. ~~He~~ SMITH landed in a new Douglas DC-3 Sleeper.

OCTOBER 5 - The Navy's first contracted PBY-1 rolled down the ramp into the bay at Lindbergh Field.

OCTOBER - San Diego High School students built a delta wing glider with a 53-foot span. Their aviation instructor, L.T.Kittredge, deserves mention here. He flew for the Navy in San Diego in 1921.

OCTOBER - Western Air Express titled their Boeing 247 flight crews Pilot, Mate and Playmate (from a contemporary magazine).

OCTOBER - Chula Vista City Council considered a $100,000 bond issue to build a municipal airport and seaplane facility to attract aircraft manufacturing companies.

NOVEMBER 3 - LCDR M.S.Brown, LEXINGTON Executive Officer, died in the crash of his airplane near Descanso enroute North Island (Brown Field got his name in 1943).

NOVEMBER 17 - Consolidated got another PBY contract from the Navy Department: 66 seaplanes for $&,056,000.

DURING THE YEAR - Carlie Madson started Madson Airport between National City and Chula Vista, on Valley Airport's old site.

Gene Kraus owned and operated the San Dieg Parachute Service.

Interesting airplanes in San Diego included Speer's Douglas M-4, a Laird LCB and Fairchild 24, and the Inland Sport at Linda Vista. Navy pilots flew the BG-1 and SBU-1 bombers, F4B-1 and F2F-1 fighters, O3U and SOC scouts, PM-1 sea-planes, OL-9 amphibians, and R4C and R2D cargo planes.

## 1936

DURING THE YEAR - The Navy led the list of airplane accidents. Fog caused one. Only four fatalities. Planes involved included an FF-1, two F3F-1s, Taylor J-2; a sailor dropped Peik's American Eagle 101 on Highway 101 trying to reach the Airport at Mission Bay. Two of Tyce's rented planes crashed because of engine failure.

## 1937

JANUARY 27 - Marine squadrons VB-4M, VF-4M, VO-8M and VJ-7M participated with the First MAG from the East Coast in Fleet Landing Exercise 4, and returned February 10.

JANUARY 28 - Twelve PBY-1 seaplanes of VP-6F under command of LCDR McDade flew nonstop from San Diego to Honolulu.

FEBRUARY 7 - Mission Bay rose to flood Peik's Airport up to his OX5 Waco cockpit.

FEBRUARY - Women's National Aeronautic Association unit organized to cooperate with 99's in creating a scholarship fund for women pilots.

MARCH - Hotel San Diego set up a Sky Lounge for aviation people.

APRIL - 514th Obs. Sqd. personnel painted a yellow/black checkerboard design on their hangar roof at Lindbergh Field. Hangar Number TWO framework awaited covering.

APRIL - SARATOGA (CV-3) and RANGER (CV-4) squadrons joined a fleet exercise.

APRIL - The Tyce School of Aviation at Chula Vista Airport had three Taylor Cubs. National City Airport offered the California Cub and the Courier PB-1. The day of the biplane waned.

MAY 8 - Dedication of new facilities at Lindbergh Field, the $40,000 Coast Guard Air Station, CO LT Linholm and a Douglas RD-4. T.C.Macaulay spoke.

MAY - Bob Kerlinger led Ryan students to places like San Francisco, Las Vegas and Tucson on weekend navigation trips. (A few years later Bob test-flew the Fireball.)

MAY - Mesa Flying Club adopted the motto: Safe-Sane-Sure; had forty members, thirty-one had soloed.

JUNE 9 - The Coast Guard Cutter ITASCA left San Diego for the South Pacific to assist Amelia Earhart during her round-the-world flight. The radioman was the last man to hear her voice.

JUNE 25 - Explorer Richard Archbold flew his Consolidated Model 28 (PBY-1) nonstop from San Diego to New York; the largest privately owned seaplane.

JULY 5 - LEXINGTON (CV-2) made a fast trip to the South Pacific to find Amelia Earhart and Noonan. No joy.

JULY - Ryan built and flew a new airplane, the S-C, Sport Cabin monoplane with a Menasco engine. Production began on 25 airplanes with more powerful Kinners by November.

## 1937

JULY 22 - Navy bombers sank the target ship ANTHONY (DD-172) off the coast of San Diego.

AUGUST 18 - GANNET (AVP-8), local seaplane tender since 1919, left town. (Sunk 6-2-42.)

AUGUST - Corrigan flew his Robin to the East Coast. He still knew east from west.

SEPTEMBER - Mesa Flying Club changed its name to San Diego Flying Club; moved to Lindbergh Field. Bert Naseef instructed in their Taylor Cub and Porterfield 35-70.

OCTOBER - The city rejected a request by glider enthusiasts to lease Torrey Pines Park Reserve. Torrey Pines Soaring Club flew there and met at Woody Brown's in La Jolla.

NOVEMBER - RANGER (CV-4) cruised to South America. The Fleet reorganization in July renumbered carrier squadrons to carrier hull numbers, e.g. VF-4, VB-4, VS-41, and VS-42 were aboard CV-4.

DECEMBER 8 - Consolidated unveiled a new four-engined flying boat, the XPB2Y-1.

DECEMBER 13 - A new airplane, Doodlebug, took off and landed safely at Lindbergh Field for the first time.

DURING THE YEAR - C.C. Flagg completed his racing plane for the National Air Races in the fall.

WRIGHT (AV-1) made a trip to the Caribbean and Hawaii before July, and operated in the local area with patrol squadrons.

Atlantic Avenue changed to Pacific Highway beside Lindbergh Field.

William Gibbs started a flying service at Madson Airport in National City until high water drove him out. He moved to the Inland Highway six miles north of San Diego and started Gibbs Airport with two airplanes. (The field became Montgomery Field in 1950.)

A list of some civil airplanes in San Diego included a Consolidated Fleetster at Lindbergh Field, a Romair at Linda Vista, Jaquot's Waco YKS-7, a Kinner Sportster and Swallow at Chula Vista, Speer's Bird BK, and a Great Lakes 2-T at Airtech.

Nine aviation fatalities in 1937; six occurred in a U.S.Navy plane crash after dark.

1938

JANUARY - LANGLEY returned. Formerly CV-1, changed to seaplane tender AV-3, the forward half of her flight deck removed; sup-ported 51 PBYs of Patrol Wing ONE, with WRIGHT (AV-1), SANDPIPER (AVP-9), and LAPWING (AVP-1).

JANUARY - Irvin Aircraft Mechanics Association was an approved aircraft instrument school.

FEBRUARY - San Diego Flying Club leased Grande Vista Airport, a mile east of Palm City, hired a field manager, scraped and rolled it, flew their planes down from Lindbergh on March 1.

FEBRUARY - Consolidated produced an average of eight PBYs every month. Sold one to American Export Airlines. Guba, Archbold's PBY, flew San Diego to Miami.

FEBRUARY - Across the street from Lindbergh Field at 3403 Pacific Highway was the Aircraft Cafe. They advertised hot lunch for 25-cents, with 10-cent milkshakes. Open from 5:30 am to 2:00 am.

MARCH 2 - The Aero Club of San Diego had an informal dinner at Hotel San Diego for 156 members, the first meeting in years.

MARCH 31 - No flying permitted at Lindbergh when visibility was less than three miles if no control tower operator was on duty.

MARCH - The fleet departed San Diego waters. SARA, LEX, and RANGER were Carrier Division ONE with four squadrons apiece, a total 266 airplanes.

APRIL - Ryan students flew the S-C at night, and made weekend flights to places like Yuma, Boulder City, and Fresno.

MAY 30 - Earl Ortman, Chief Pilot at Speer Flying Service, set a new world's closed course speed record of 265.5 mph in Oakland flying the Marcoux-Bromberg Special. Two days later he set an Oakland to San Diego record in 1 hour, 48 minutes, and hangared the racer at Airtech.

MAY - Ryan got their largest order - $100,000 for 500 collector rings, 400 exhaust pipes for new Army bombers. Ryan began building a 500,000 square foot factory on the west side of Lindbergh Field.

JUNE 2 - Archbold and pilot Russell Rogers left San Diego for two years in the South Pacific with their PBY Guba, NC-777.

JUNE 13 - Doc Sloan was one of three Ryan pilots who delivered three STMs to Honduras.

1938

JUNE 19 - Rollie Tyce won the Spot Landing Contest at Grande Vista Airport held by San Diego Flying Club. Contest held every Sunday, four to sunset.

JUNE 24-25 - Clarence Prescott ~~had~~ held an Air Show at Linda Vista Airport with parachute jumpers Frank Derry, Dot Barden, and sailor Bob Fronius(got court-martialed for jumping), world's craziest pilot Al Lary, Harry Crosby stunted his Fokker Universal, BVD races and more.

JUNE - Ryan announced a machine gun version of the S-T.

JUNE - Consolidated published an article about a 100-passenger flying boat on their drawing boards.

JULY - Patrol Wing ONE PBYs made a record-breaking flight from San Diego to Seattle to Alaska and return.

JULY - LCDR Fahrney brought a USN team to Otay Mesa with two Stearman-Hammond JH-1, and two Curtiss N2C-2 drone airplanes plus two TG-2 control airplanes to prove the use of anti-aircraft target drones.

AUGUST 16 - Two VP-5 PBYs making night landings in the bay off National City hit obstructions in the water and sank with four fatalities.

AUGUST 21 - Walt McClain test flew the Minx at North Island. Hugh Nicholson flew the rebuilt Flagg racer at Lindbergh Field.

AUGUST 24 - RANGER fired anti-aircraft guns at a JH-1 drone from Otay Mesa passing overhead at 10,000 feet.

AUGUST Navy got the Consolidated XPB2Y four-engined seaplane.

SEPTEMBER 11 - Fresh from Ireland, Wrong Way Corrigan flew down to San Diego in his Robin to visit friends.

SEPTEMBER 14 - The world's first air-to-surface guided missile, a N2C-2 drone from Otay Mesa under control from a TG-2, made dive bomb tests on ex-battleship UTAH (AG-16).

OCTOBER - Chula Vista flyers took three Cubs, a Great Lakes, an Arrow V8 and a Gypsy Moth to a small tree-bordered field in El Cajon, and trucked to town for Sunday breakfast.

NOVEMBER - The three carriers and PATWING ONE, more than 400 airplanes and 100 ships, did a three-day exercise off the coast.

DURING THE YEAR - Clark Gable, Spencer Tracy and Myrna Loy acted in Test Pilot, partly filmed at Lindbergh Field.

1938

DURING THE YEAR - Interesting Navy planes were the Sikorsky JRS-1, and SB2U. On the civil list was a Star Cavalier at Linda Vista, Aeronca K, and a Bathtub plane (?) at Peik Airport.

Accidents beside the PBY disaster in August included a fatal Ryan STA crash, two Marine Corps fighters in a mid-air - one pilot jumped and the other landed, an N2C-2 drone crash on Otay Mesa, and a JRS-1 crash the last day of the year.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1939

JANUARY 1 - New Year's Glider Meet at Torrey Pines from December 31 to January 2. 1000 people attended the dedication of Torrey Pines Soaring Field to the Youth of America. John Robinson dropped 300 cachet letters.

JANUARY 2 - WRIGHT (AV-1) left port for war games in the Caribbean with Patrol Wing ONE, and 48 PBYs.

JANUARY 4 - LEXINGTON (CV-2) and RANGER (CV-4) left port for maneuvers. RANGER went to East Coast with VB-3, VF-4, VS-41 and VS-42. RANGER didn't return but,

JANUARY 31 - The Army moved their last properties from old Rockwell Field to Sacramento. They'd been on North Island since 1913.

JANUARY - CAA had a radio communications station on top of the Lindbergh Field Administration Building.

FEBRUARY 1 - LANGLEY (AV-3) followed RANGER to East Coast and never returned. (Sunk by enemy action 2-27-42 with load of P-40s aboard.)

FEBRUARY 9 - John Robinson flew his glider, Robin, from Torrey Pines to Alpine, reaching 5000 feet.

MARCH - Solar Aircraft more than doubled their factory space beside Lindbergh Field.

MARCH - Filming The Magnificent Fraud at the Coast Guard base with a PBY flown by Bill Wheatley, Consolidated Chief Pilot.

APRIL - YORKTOWN (CV-5) and ENTERPRISE (CV-6) came to town for training with the Pacific fleet.

MAY 4 - Consolidated rolled out the Model 31, a twin-engine seaplane with the new Davis wing. (The wing and tail design ended up on B-24 bombers.) First flight May 5.

MAY 6 - Charles Lindbergh ~~flew into~~ landed at Lindbergh Field in a Curtiss P-36A to visit Consolidated and Ryan aircraft companies.

JUNE 10 - The first US warplane to fly the Atlantic was a San Diego-built Consolidated PBY delivered to the British. They named them Catalinas.

JUNE 17 - Eight Ryan instructors landed Stearman PT-13s at Lindbergh Field after flying cross country from Randolph Field(?). The new Army school used the biplanes until the Ryan monoplane trainers were built.

JUNE - Ryan got a $50,000 contract to build YPT-16 Army trainers.

1939

JUNE - San Diego Vocational High School ~~had a building~~ taught airplane construction in all its. at State and Market, ~~teaching airplane construction~~. ~~The~~ Aircraft companies needed good help.

JUNE - The second Air Reserve hangar at Lindbergh got roofed and the words U.S.ARMY AIR CORPS RESERVE on the wall.

JUNE - President signed the Civil Pilot Training Program bill. It paid civilian schools to train pilots before going to military flight schools. The Air Corps and Navy schools couldn't handle the number of students needed in the next couple years.

JULY 1 - The first class of 35 Air Corps cadets began flight training at the Ryan school on Lindbergh Field in Hearmans'

JULY 1 - WRIGHT (AV-1) left for Honolulu.

JULY - The photo made a national magazine. On final, Carl Thomasson tangled his Cub with the power lines near Speer Airport. He climbed down safely before the plane caught fire and left its blackened skeleton for photographers.

JULY - Ryan moved across Lindbergh to the new factory. New Air Corps classes moved into the former buildings beside Pacific Highway. One old hangar had been moved across the field.

AUGUST - The Consolidated XPB2Y flew from San Diego to Seattle and back. It was Flagplane for COMAIRCRAFTSCOUTFOR, the first flagplane in the Navy.

AUGUST - First class in Army history to be trained in low wing monoplanes - the Ryan YPT-16 - at Lindbergh Field.

AUGUST - $750,000 improvement program for Lindbergh Field included 40 floodlights, two-light approach lane, seaplane control station, 2200-foot paved runway added to 2800-foot paved runway, enlarged from 280 to 413 acres.

AUGUST - Consolidated got their second Air Corps contract of the year for B-24 bombers, and the first plane not flown, yet; total $10,765,000.

SEPTEMBER - A Navy crew flew the Consolidated XPB2Y across country and back.

SEPTEMBER - Speer Flying Service qualified to train CPTP students (see June).

OCTOBER 1 - San Diego came under CAA Airway Traffic Control. All planes over the control area had to submit flight plans and get approval from CAA air traffic control center.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1939

OCTOBER - Fourteen girl students started The Lady Birds, a flying club at Speer Airport.

NOVEMBER - China ordered 49 Ryan ST airplanes, and were permitted to build them in China.

NOVEMBER - Ryan building three YO-51 observation planes for the Army Air Corps.

NOVEMBER - Ryan used an auxiliary landing field in Mission Bay and at Rosedale(Balboa and Charger) for Air Corps cadets. Classes enlarged from 35 to 45 students.

NOVEMBER - San Diego Junior College chosen for CPT Program.

DECEMBER 17 - On the anniversary of the Wright brother's flight San Diego Flying Club and Alpha Eta Rho Flying Club flew a competitive air meet at Linda Vista Airport.

DECEMBER 29 - The Consolidated XB-24 bomber completed its first flight, piloted by Bill Wheatley from Lindbergh Field.

DECEMBER - Members of the Anne Lindbergh Gliders, defunct since about 1931, wanted a permanent home for the Bowlus flown by CAL and Anne. (It was not saved.)

DECEMBER - Another flying club was formed, this time at Lindbergh Field - Southern California Flyers, with a new Piper Cub.

DURING THE YEAR - The Coast Guard added a PBY and two Hall PH-2 flying boats to their hangar at Lindbergh Field.

A couple Naval officers stationed at San Diego went on to fame: Captain Marc Mitscher and RADM E.J.King.

Clarence Prescott flew T.P.Hall's new roadable airplane at Linda Vista Airport. Hall was a Consolidated aeronautical engineer.

Airplanes you could have seen: Grunau 8 glider and Hall XCP-1 flying car, Navy Fairchild JK-1, Lockheed XJO-3, Curtiss SBC divebombers at North Island, and a visiting Army Martin B-10 at Lindbergh.

Most airplane accidents were military. A Reserve BT-9 nosed over at Lindbergh, three F3F crashes, a BG-1 caught fire over Borrego and the crew jumped,a TBD dropped in the bay-two killed, pilot jumped, and an Air Corps cadet got thrown from a Ryan but parachuted safely at Gibbs Field. Madson Airport's Courier PB-1 crashed, killing three.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1940

Compared to almost a million in 1985, the population of San Diego was just over 200,000, and growing with aircraft workers; National City-10,300, Coronado-5,400, Chula Vista-5,000, La Mesa- 4,000, El Cajon-1,500.

JANUARY 21 - PATOKA (AV-6) steamed into port for a few days stay. (Was a dirigible tender when she was AO-9)

FEBRUARY - TBD airplanes from Torpedo Squadron 5 practiced bombing UTAH (AG-16), a former battleship.

FEBRUARY - Ryan got a $200,000 contract for exhaust manifolds.

MARCH 3-4 Soaring meet at Torrey Pines attracted 17 sailplanes, 35 pilots and 200 spectators. John Robinson won.

MARCH 29 - LEXINGTON (CV-2), SARATOGA (CV-3), and YORKTOWN (CV-5) departed San Diego on Fleet Problem XXI at Hawaii. ENTERPRISE (CV-6) entered port several times during the year.

APRIL - The Consair Flying Club formed at Chula Vista Airport with members from Consolidated. (Still active in 1985)

APRIL - Marine bombing squadron VMB-2 at North Island was first outfit to get the Douglas SBD, an important divebomber in World War TWO.

MAY - Consolidated had about 16,500 employees and kept hiring.

JUNE - GILBERT (DD-119) recommissioned here to be AVD-12, a seaplane tender.

JUNE - Local college student Bill Tascher, 19, learned to fly Piper J-3Cs in the CPT Program at Speer Airport instructed by Johnny Coats. (At age 23, Tascher piloted B-25 bombers in China.)

JULY 18 - Ryan got an $800,000 contract from China for STM-2 trainers.

JULY - Speer Airport added a traffic control tower, dispatcher's office, student room, and extended the hangar to handle the CPT Program airplanes.

AUGUST 6 - California approved Articles of Incorporation for Rohr Aircraft. Subcontract work began in Rohr's garage.

AUGUST 19 - Rohr leased the building at 8th and J Street for a factory and built parts for Consolidated LB-30s and Lockheed Hudsons. (Catholic soup kitchen in 1983)

SEPTEMBER - Ryan got a $1,110,566 contract for training Air Corps cadets.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1940

SEPTEMBER - A $1,400,000 program lengthened the Lindbergh Field runway to handle B-24 bombers.

SEPTEMBER - Ryan got a Navy order for 100 NR-1 trainers, like Army PT-22s.

SEPTEMBER - The largest sign on the Pacific coast took 175 gallons of paint to apply to the roof of a shed on Lindbergh Field, 1004 X 34 feet, with letters 25 feet high spelling: CONSOLIDATED.

SEPTEMBER - The AAF ordered prototypes of the Consolidated B-32.

OCTOBER 24 - San Diego State students entered the CPT Program.

OCTOBER - Rohr Aircraft bought the Chula Vista Airport property from Santa Fe Railroad and began building a factory. Tyce School of Aviation prepared to move to Lindbergh Field.

NOVEMBER - Ryan in full production on the STM-2 seaplane.

DECEMBER 16 - Five Marine reserve scouting squadrons reported to North Island for active duty.

DECEMBER - Rohr got a $3,238,292 contract from Consolidated to make 800 power packs for PB2Y-3 airplanes.

DURING THE YEAR - United Airlines named a Boeing 247 "City of San Diego." UAL planes carried 165,298 passengers from San Diego to Seattle in 1940.

Fred Ridout started a radio show, Plane Gossip, about local aviators, on KFSD, sponsored by COC.

Frank Seifert, local politician and former local Army Reserve pilot (since 1922) suggested closing Lindbergh Field and moving it to Mission Bay. He lived on Point Loma under the flight path.

The Air Corps ordered hundreds of Ryan trainers such as the PT-20, PT-20A, PT-21 and PT-22 (the most popular).

Some airplanes here during 1940: Speer's Waco UPF-7, Litell's Whitcap glider, Rearwin Sportster at Grande Vista Airport, Curtiss SOC-4 V-171 and Hall PH-3 V-166 at the Coast Guard base, Gibbs' Luscombe 8A, Navy Brewster F2A Buffalos, an Air Reserve Boeing P-12, and a North American BT-9.

Consolidated completed 21 PBY-5 and 1 PB2Y-2 airplane for the Navy during the year.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1940

Most accidents were military with at least twelve fatalities from nine crashes. Two TBDs collided, power lines got a trainer and a bomber. Two civilians crashed a light plane on Otay Mesa. One died. The other became the Chula Vista Chief of Police later years.

A number of Navy pilots and aircrewmen stationed here in 1940 got killed in the war. The Navy named ships, usually a destroyer escort, in their memory, e.g.:

WILLIAM C. MILLER (DE-259) KIA 12-7-41
WALTER M. WILLIS (DE-395) KIA 12-7-41
FRED T. WEBER (APD-75) KIA 5-28-42
J.D.WOODSON (DE-359) KIA 6-4-42
NORMAN F. VANDIVIER (DE-540) KIA 6-4-42
CHARLES A. TABBERER (DE-418) KIA 8-7-42.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1941

JANUARY - The year started off with the movie Dive Bomber at the Plaza Theater, much of it filmed at North Island.

JANUARY - Consolidated made a movie of San Diego aviation history.

JANUARY - Consolidated's facilities increase by $14.5 million to build patrol bombers for the Navy: Plant TWO, west of Lindbergh Field on the north side of Pacific Highway across from the Marine Base and extending to Rosecrans.

FEBRUARY 1 - Completion date of first Rohr building at Chula Vista Airport.

FEBRUARY - Tyce School of Aviation moved from Chula Vista Airport to Lindbergh Field, stayed a short time. Then Tyce joined with Lou Loyko and moved the School to El Cajon, east of Magnolia and parallel to and north of Greenfield.

APRIL 11 - The Army initiated a design competition for an intercontinental bomber. Consolidated's entry was the XB-36.

APRIL 17 - Western Air Express changed name to Western Air Lines. Called oldest scheduled airline in San Diego. Flying five Boeing 247D and seven Douglas DC-3 airliners.

APRIL - San Diego Vocational School's Defense Department moved into the Ford Building in Balboa Park, recently vacated by the Coast AA Artillery. Their $300,000 investment bought machines and equipment to train people in aircraft construction skills.

MAY 15 - During paratroop training at Kearny Mesa auxiliary landing field near Camp Elliott, Marine LT Osipoff jumped from a Marine R2D (DC-2), flown by Captain Johnson. One end of the static cable in the plane tore loose, tangled, and resulted in Osipoff dangling upside down, helpless, behind the plane. LT Lowrey and ACMM McCants took off in an SOC from North Island's flight test line, pulled the Marine into the rear seat and cut him loose. He survived.

JUNE 2 - Consolidated test pilot Bill Wheatley and his flight test crew died in the crash of their B-24 in San Diego bay, the fault of a stray bolt jamming the elevator controls.

AUGUST - Speer bought Airtech at Lindbergh Field from owner Lawton.

SEPTEMBER 25 - Some Republic P-43s arrived at North Island and stayed for nine months as interceptors.

OCTOBER 3 - Consolidated's XB-36 design was picked for an intercontinental bomber.

OCTOBER - The airplane spotting network received training at the filter center in the Spreckles Building.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1941

November 25. Reuben Fleet reached an agreement with The Aviation Corporation to sell Consolidated Aircraft Corporation. He remained with CAC as a consultant.

DECEMBER 1 - Rohr delivered the first of 800 PB2Y-3 power packs on a subcontract from Consolidated.

DECEMBER 7 - The aircraft spotting center was first in the country to begin round-the-clock operations. Personnel reported for duty as soon as they heard of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

DECEMBER 7 - Chula Vistan Robert Tyce died from a Japanese aircraft machine gun bullet at his airport in Honolulu.

DECEMBER 8 - Lockheed P-38s of the ~~95~~ 94TH th Pursuit Squadron arrived at North Island on duty as interceptors.

DECEMBER 8 - SARATOGA (CV-3) and her squadrons got underway for Pearl Harbor: VMF-221 with F2As, VF-3 with F4Fs, VB-3 with SBDs, VS-3 with SBCs, and VT-3 with TBDs.

DECEMBER 19 - The Chula Vista Star published Air Raid Protection Instructions on the front page.

DECEMBER 30 - YORKTOWN (CV-5) arrived in San Diego and departed January 6, 1942 for Samoa and the war. (Sunk by enemy action June 7, 1942.)

DECEMBER - Airplane owners removed propellers and rudders from private planes. No flying allowed.

DECEMBER - Ed Oberbauer, Ryan production test pilot flew 82 different PT-22s, some more than once, during the month.

DURING THE YEAR - Consolidated delivered 56 OA-10 (PBY-5A) amphibians to the Army in FY 1941.

Army Air Force ordered three Consolidated XB-32 bombers in FY 1941.

Consolidated built 395 PBY-5 and 4 PB2Y-2 Navy seaplanes, and began delivering Catalinas (PBYs) to England.

Ryan delivered 110 STM-2s to the Netherland Indies' Army and Navy and 100 NR-1 (PT-21) trainers to the United States Navy. The Army ordered 1,023 PT-22 trainers.

Airplanes in San Diego in 1941: Tyce's Butler Blackhawk at Lindbergh, Gibbs' Travel Air Tank 2000 and Crown B-3, Soaring Club's Haller Hawk, Ryan's new PT-16, PT-20, and PT-21 trainers for the Army.

About twenty aviators died in accidents. An R3D-1 hit Mother Grundy peak January 4, two divebombers crashed near La Jolla February 26, two killed in a crash near San Diego March 12, Navy plane crash May 8, LB-30 crash in May, and an F3F-2 crash June 29. Another bomber crash in the bay killed two October 4.

1941 December 31. Naval aircraft at San Diego:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bombers: | 11 | BG-1 | Base Force |
| | 1 | BT-1 | NAS San Diego |
| Fighters: | 3 | F2A-2 | Battle Force |
| | 1 | F2A-2 | ACTG, Pacific |
| | 5 | F2A-3 | Battle Force |
| | 3 | F4B-3 | Base Force |
| | 5 | F4B-4/A | Base Force |
| | 4 | F3F-2 | BAD-2 |
| | 10 | F3F-2 | Battle Force |
| | 4 | F4F-3/A | Battle Force |
| | 18 | F4F-3 | YORKTOWN (CV-5) |
| Transport: | 1 | GB-1 | NAS San Diego |
| | 1 | JK-1 | NAS San Diego |
| Utility: | 1 | JF-1 | San Diego NAD |
| | 1 | J2F-1 | TTS San Diego |
| | 2 | J2F-1/2 | VJ-1, Base Force |
| | 4 | J2F-2/3 | VJ-2, Base Force |
| | 3 | J2F-4 | VJ-1, Base Force |
| | 1 | J2F-4 | VJ-3 Base Force |
| | 1 | J2F-4 | VMO-251 |
| | 7 | J2F-5 | Base Force |
| | 4 | J2F-5 | Battle Force |
| | 2 | J2F-5 | YORKTOWN (CV-5) |
| | 4 | JRB-1 | VJ-3, Base Force |
| | 1 | JRB-2 | BAD-2 |
| | 1 | JRF-1 | San Diego OPerations |
| | 2 | JRF-1A | VJ-3, Base Force |
| | 3 | JRF-5 | NAS San Diego |
| | 1 | N3N-1 | ACTG, Pacific |
| Observation | 3 | OS2U-1 | Battle Force |
| | 1 | OS2U-1 | Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet |
| | 1 | OS2U-2 | ACTG, Pacific |
| | 1 | OS2U-3 | Battle Force |
| | 2 | OS2U-3 | VMO-251 |
| | 3 | O3U-3/6 | VJ-3, Base Force |
| Patrol | 1 | PBY-1 | Base Force |
| | 2 | PBY-4 | Project Baker, TTS Pacific |
| | 3 | PBY-5 | TTS, Pacific |
| | 6 | PBY-5A | INA, Consolidated (flight test) |
| | 22 | PBY-5A | TTS, Pacific |
| | 4 | PB2Y-2 | TTS, Pacific (VP-13) |
| | 1 | XPB2Y-3 | NAS San Diego (test) |
| Transport | 1 | R2D-1 | BAD-2 |
| | 1 | R3D-1 | NAS San Diego |
| Scout | 2 | SF-1 | Battle Force |
| | 1 | SF-1 | NAS San Diego |
| | 1 | SF-1 | INA, Consolidated |
| | 6 | SBC-3 | Battle Force |
| | 3 | SBC-3 | NAS San Diego |
| | 1 | SBC-4 | Wing HQ, FMF |
| | 4 | SBC-4 | BAD-2 (overhaul) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 7 | SBC-4 | Battle Force |
| | 4 | SBC-4 | NAS San Diego |
| | 1 | SBD-1 | Battle Force |
| | 1 | SBD-1 | BAD-2 |
| | 5 | SBD-2 | ACTG, Pacific |
| | 2 | SBD-2 | Commander, Aircraft Battle Force |
| | 5 | SBD-2 | Battle Force |
| | 11 | SBD-3 | Battle Force |
| | 19 | SBD-3 | VB-5, YORKTOWN (CV-5) |
| | 16 | SBD-3 | ACTU, Pacific |
| | 19 | SBD-3 | VS-5, YORKTOWN (CV-5) |
| | 1 | SBD-3 | Air Group Commander, YORKTOWN (CV-5) |
| | 2 | SB2U-3 | BAD-2 |
| | 3 | SOC-1 | Scouting Force |
| | 1 | SOC-1 | NAS San Diego |
| | 1 | SOC-3 | CONCORD (CL-10) |
| | 1 | SOC-3 | NAS San Diego |
| | 1 | SON-1 | CONCORD (CL-10) |
| Training | 1 | SNJ-2 | Commander, Aircraft Battle Force |
| | 1 | SNJ-2 | NAS San Diego |
| | 2 | SNJ-3 | VS-5, YORKTOWN (CV-5) |
| | 2 | SNJ-3 | VMO-251 |
| | 8 | SNJ-3 | ACTG, Pacific |
| Torpedo | 14 | TBD-1 | VT-5, YORKTOWN (CV-5) |
| | 6 | TBD-1 | Battle Force |
| | 1 | TBD-1 | NAS San Diego |
| | 1 | TG-2 | NAS San Diego |

Total: 311 aircraft

Abbreviations used:

| | |
|---|---|
| ACTG | Advanced Carrier Training Unit |
| BAD | Base Air Detachment (USMC) |
| FMF | Fleet Marine Force |
| HQ | Headquarters |
| INA | Inspector of Naval Aircraft |
| NAD | Naval Ammunition Depot |
| NAS | Naval Air Station |
| TTS | Transition Training Unit |

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1942

JANUARY 6 - With anchors aweigh, YORKTOWN (CV-5) got underway from San Diego bay to fight the Japanese Navy. It sank in ~~July~~ June.

JANUARY - Although the Office of Civil Defense grounded the California wing of the Civil Air Patrol it was ready when needed.

FEBRUARY 14 - Rohr delivered the first four B-24 power packages downtown to Consolidated from its new Chula Vista plant.

FEBRUARY 27 - USS LANGLEY, remembered by many San Diegans since 1924, sank after attack by enemy airplanes near Java.

FEBRUARY - The Navy bought the Consolidated Model 31, the speedy twin-engined seaplane that proved the value of the Davis wing on the B-24 bomber. They designated it XP4Y-1 and gave the shiny plane a coat of camouflage paint and a nose turret.

FEBRUARY - The Secretary of the Navy asked high school students to build 500,000 wooden scale airplane models, 10,000 each of 50 types per Navy plans for the Identification Training of aviators.

FEBRUARY - The Civil Air Patrol got permission to fly from Lindbergh Field in a BT-13 and an L-5 kept in the former Air Reserve hangar. Civilians got permission to fly their airplanes to Arizona. Some drove over on weekends to fly. Gas rationing slowed even those stalwarts.

FEBRUARY - San Diego tested ten installed motor-driven air raid sirens and ordered twelve more. (Some are still in place.)

FEBRUARY - The Police Department enforced the new wartime speed limit: 35 miles per hour. Reuben Fleet got a ticket for speeding and suspension of his driver's license for sixty days.

MARCH 27 - Black parachutist Howard "Skipper" Smith ran America's first Negro-managed war plant. The Pacific Parachute Company hired twenty white, Mexican, and Negro girls.

MARCH - Posters urged San Diegans to do their best: K.O. Tokyo - Slap the Jap Off the Map - Lick the Stamps and Whip the Tramps - Say it with Fliers.

MARCH - Air Raid Wardens went to class at Kearny High School on Tuesday and Thursday from 7:30 to 9:30pm.

MARCH - Ryan flight-tested dozens of ST-3KNs at El Cajon after a short cross-country hop from Lindbergh to a strip beside Greenfield and Magnolia.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1942

MARCH - Mrs. Colin Kelly arrived at San Diego and christened a B-24 "The Colin Kelly." Her Air Corps husband gave his life during the destruction of a Japanese ship while piloting a B-17.

APRIL - Consolidated started Consairways, a California-Australia airline using the B-24 bomber converted to carry passengers and cargo. It helped prove installations and improvements, a beneficial side effect.

MAY 8 - The Marine Corps established Camp Gillespie in El Cajon, west across Magnolia Avenue from El Cajon Airport to train paratroopers. It got Marine Capt. Archibald Gillespie's name. He participated in the seizure of San Diego from Mexico in 1846. Paratroopers practiced descending from three tall towers.

MAY 15 - To help American gunners who shot at red balls first and made inquiries later, authorities issued orders to remove the red center from the national insignia on American planes.

MAY - New Grumman TBF-1 torpedo planes left San Diego aboard the ten-year old KITTY HAWK (APV-1), bound for reformed Torpedo Squadron 8, decimated during the Battle of Midway.

MAY? - Army balloon crews raised their fat kites around Lindbergh Field. Winches connected to 8-foot concrete cubes sunk three feet into 32 backyards and empty lots. Anti-aircraft gun crews began round-the-clock vigils for enemy airplanes. Workers built a high concrete wall (splinter shield) along Pacific Highway beside the Consolidated factory buildings. The Army supervised construction of chicken-feather camouflage resembling blocks of private housing from the air. It rested on cables over the aircraft factory buildings and Pacific Highway.

JUNE - The Army set up a priority system for airline seats.

JUNE - One-year old USS LONG ISLAND (AVG-1) loaded at North Island, perhaps San Diego's first look at a baby flattop.

JULY 1 - USS WASP (CV-7) departed San Diego for war and was sunk September 15.

JULY 23 - William Van Dusen, long-time aviation booster in San Diego, lost his life in a B-24 crash in New Mexico.

JULY - Consolidated announced their assembly line production method increased production 300-400 percent.

JULY - CAB suspended United Air Lines San Diego-Los Angeles service to compensate for equipment diverted to war transport.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1942

AUGUST 16 - A young lady and gentleman from the CAP enjoying the Coronado beach before class watched P-38s from the 95th Pursuit Squadron make their landing approaches on North Island. One of the fighters settled into the water, instead, 150 yards from shore. The young man,Jim Fitzhugh, swam out and helped the pilot, LT Leighton, get safely ashore.

AUGUST - North Island's two landmark oval hangars went up at North Island. Would bombs bounce off?

AUGUST - The Transition Training Squadron at North Island received their first Consolidated PB4Y-1(B-24D) Liberators.

SEPTEMBER 7 - Marine pilots of VMF-124 got the first Vought Corsair fighters, followed a few weeks later by Navy pilots in VF-12. Both squadrons flew from North Island.

SEPTEMBER 7 - First test flight of the Consolidated XB-32 from Lindbergh Field was successful.

SEPTEMBER - A & R at North Island received three captured and damaged Japanese Mitsubishi Zero fighters. Workers began to make one airplane out of the three in secrecy behind the locked doors of the balloon hangar. Navy pilots flew the Zero in the local area for motion pictures in mock combat with American combat planes to learn its good and bad points for dissemination overseas. It flew back east for further evaluation.

OCTOBER - Thirteen carrier squadrons trained in the San Diego area to go to war.

NOVEMBER 22 - Captain Harold Russell piloted the first American Airlines plane landing at Lindbergh Field, the first San Diego-Los Angeles-New York service. Russell learned to fly at North Island in 1918.

DECEMBER 31 - The Army Air Force approved the Consolidated XC-99 for construction.

DURING THE YEAR - The Advanced Carrier Training Group at NAS San Diego, North Island, flew a mixed bag of airplanes including the Brewster F2A-2, Grumman F4F-3A and F4F-4, Douglas SBD and North American SNJ-3.

A special Grumman F4F-7 set a coast-to-coast record nonstop flight from Floyd Bennett Field in New York to San Diego, in 11 hours.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1942

The Transition Training Squadron at North Island taught pilots to fly the Consolidated PBY-5A.

A team of Navy pilots at North Island flight-tested hundreds of PBY and PB2Y seaplanes from Consolidated's production lines across the bay.

The World War I training field on Otay Mesa, once named East Field, got the name NAAS Otay Mesa (Naval Auxiliary Air Station).

The Marine Corps and the Navy commissioned Marine Corps Air Depot, Miramar and NAAS Miramar, consecutively, at Camp Kearny.

Coast Guard Air Station pilots flew a Douglas RD-4 Dolphin, two old Vought biplanes, and two Grumman Ducks. Two dismantled Hall PH seaplanes lay beside the hangar.

The AAF bought a Ryan SC and designated it L-10. (It was still licensed in 1978.)

Ed Oberbauer, Ryan production test pilot, flew 601 hops in PT-22 airplanes during the year. Almost all were different planes.

Several veteran aviators from San Diego's pre-war days joined Consolidated's test pilot team flying dozens of PBY seaplanes. To name a few familiar names: Bob Jaquot, Adolf Dieterle, and Doug Kelley. World War One RAF fighter pilot Frank Courtney also joined the group.

Three mechs died when a tire exploded in April. In July one aviator died in a Marine plane crash. An SBD ditched in the ocean 12 miles off Point Loma.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1943

JANUARY - Army and Navy jointly announced popular, easily remembered names for military airplanes.

JANUARY - Pilots from VF-12 tried new anti-blackout suits (G-suits) while flying their Vought F4U-1s from North Island.

FEBRUARY 11 - Ryan signed a contract to build three prototype XFR-1 Fireballs for the Navy. It was a twin-engine fighter, with one reciprocating radial, and one turbojet engine.

FEBRUARY - Convair bought Stout Engineering Company. It became a research division on helicopters and flying automobiles, among other projects, led by Bill Stout, famous for his Ford trimotor design, new Director of Research at Convair.

MARCH 18 - Consolidated Aircraft Corporation merged with its owner, Vultee Aircraft Inc., the result being Consolidated-Vultee Aircraft Corporation.

MARCH - Fighting Squadron NINE completed Carrier Qualification on LONG ISLAND (ACV-1) off San Diego, first squadron flying the new Grumman F6F Hellcats. LONG ISLAND trained carrier pilots all year long.

MARCH - Convair bought Studebaker's Arrowbile holding, and got Waldo Waterman's No. 4/1 Arrowbile, built by Studebaker in 1938, then located in Dearborn, Michigan. The acquisition had future significance for San Diego.

MAY - Civil Air Patrol transferred from the Office of Civil Defense to the War Department.

JUNE - Convair had about 44,000 employees.

JUNE 5 - United Air Lines resumed flights to San Diego.

JUNE - The Transition Training Unit, teaching seaplanes at North Island, included a Transition Landplane Unit training pilots to fly 4-engined PB4Y-1s for forming squadrons.

JULY 11 - The Navy renamed NAAS Otay Mesa. Originally named for Army Major East, killed in 1918, it got the new title NAAS Brown Field, for LCDR Melville S. Brown, killed in 1936.

JULY - A formal event typified dozens of similar events in San Diego until the end of the war. Bombing Squadron 106 commissioned at Camp Kearny with new Consolidated PB4Y-1 Liberators under command of LCDR Chick Hayward and flew overseas the next month. The pilots trained from the field used to train the 40th Division of doughboys in World War ONE, the field where Charles Lindbergh weight-tested his famous monoplane in 1927.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1943

JULY - After the first flight of the Convair P4Y Corregidor prototype built in New Orleans, the Navy decided against producing the speedy twin-engined Model 31 of 1939 that proved the Davis wing for the B-24. Necessary hull redesign and an engine shortage caused the decision.

AUGUST - Underway for the Pacific war, BUNKER HILL(CV-17) departed San Diego with her squadrons including VB-17 flying new Curtiss SB2C Helldivers.

SEPTEMBER - New blackout regulations required airline passengers to close their window blinds five minutes before takeoff and landing at Lindbergh Field.

SEPTEMBER - Convair's torpedo bomber design, the TBY, began production in Pennsylvania. It never entered combat.

OCTOBER - Native Sons of the Golden West wanted a marker on Otay bluff to commemmorate Montgomery's 1883 glider flight.

OCTOBER - Arnholt C. Smith became a Director for Ryan Aeronautical Corporation.

DECEMBER 1 - Seaplane tender USS McFARLAND (AVD-14) got its original classification back, (DD-237), and operated with aircraft carriers in the San Diego area until September 1945.

DECEMBER 2 - Ryan got a contract to build one hundred twin-engined FR-1 Fireball fighters for the Navy; one reciprocal engine with prop in the nose, and a turbojet in the tail.

DECEMBER - The Coast Guard organized the first Air-Sea Rescue unit in the US.

DURING THE YEAR - Twenty-two different escort and light aircraft carriers steamed up the bay past Ballast Point. A few of the new ships reminded local families of relatives killed in the Pacific: CORREGIDOR (CVE-58), GUADALCANAL (CVE-60), and the SOLOMONS (CVE-67). In November, San Diegoans waved goodbye to the USS MISSION BAY (CVE-59), named for the local bay. It didn't return, but spent the war in the Atlantic.

North Island continued to use Pier J, the only aircraft carrier loading pier, and added its first two concrete runways, 29/11 and 18/36.

A contractor poured cement on the dirt at NAAS Ream Field in Imperial Beach, building the first permanent runways since the field went into use in 1918.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1943

Accidents included a P-38 from North Island crashing near Ramona in January, a navy patrol bomber on San Diego bay in February, and a terrible take-off crash of the Consolidated XB-32 into the Marine Base on May 10. The list is incomplete.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1944

JANUARY - During the first month of Air Sea Rescue by Coast Guard Air Station personnel there were 124 aircraft accidents, 201 people, 137 saved, 59 killed outright, 25% saved by Coast Guard planes and boats.

JANUARY 3 - The CAA stopped airline service to over-used Lindbergh Field after the airlines complained the field was unsafe for landings and take-offs. It reopened January 15.

JANUARY - Convair won the WPB rating Highest Output Per Man Per Day - average 8.2 pounds of airplane produced for every man-day worked in 1943.

JANUARY - LONG ISLAND (ACV-1) and its crew made friends in town. The little aircraft carrier trained navy pilots all year long.

FEBRUARY 4 - The Goodyear K-29 blimp landed aboard ALTAMAHA (CVE-18), underway near San Diego, the first non-rigid aircraft to land aboard ship.

FEBRUARY - American Airlines scheduled six planes leaving San Diego every day; Western Air Lines scheduled eleven.

FEBRUARY - San Diego High School teachers Constance Bowman and Clara Allen wrote Slacks and Callouses, their account of women working in San Diego's aircraft factories.

FEBRUARY - The Navy tried out JATO bottles (Jet Assisted Take-Off) on a Grumman TBF from VTMB-131 at North Island.

MARCH - Convair's Research Department worked on several projects: a roadable airplane, flying automobile, helicopter, new heavy bomber and a giant transcontinental bomber.

MARCH - The Navy accepted the first Convair PB4Y-2 Privateer from the 900-foot long plant along Pacific Highway.

APRIL - As dredges worked to fill Spanish Bight, the shallow water site of Glenn Curtiss' seaplane experiments in 1911 between North Island and Coronado faded into memory.

APRIL - Ryan Aeronautical Corporation applied to the CAB for six feeder and pick-up airline routes in California; Ryan planned twin-engine airplanes with pick-up devices for the cities between scheduled stops.

MAY - Ryan filed for a trans-Pacific airline routes from California to Calcutta, India, plus one to Havana, Cuba, and another Los Angeles-San Diego route.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1944

MAY - Convair completed the first test flight of the one-off Model 39, a passenger-transport with the B-24 Davis wing, engines and landing gear. American Airlines tried it out for a short period after the war.

MAY - After shakedown and training, the new baby flattop USS TAKANIS BAY (CVE-89) trained 2,509 pilots for carrier operations from Fleet Air, San Diego by the time the war ended in August 1945.

JUNE - Convair stopped building PBY and PB2Y-type aircraft.

JUNE 15 - Convair got orders to speed up production of the B-32 and slow down on development of the B-36.

JULY - North Island became the overhaul point for TBF, TBM, SB2C, FM, and PB4Y aircraft.

JULY 25 - Ryan test pilot Kerlinger flew the XFR-1 Fireball from Lindbergh Field on its first flight.

JULY 28 - The crew of USS COPAHEE (ACV-12) offloaded Japanese aircraft on North Island.

AUGUST - USS MAKASSAR STRAIT (CVE-91), underway off the coast of San Diego, refueled the Goodyear K-111, a 251-foot Navy patrol blimp in flight. The baby flattop served as an aviator training ship from July to September in San Diego.

AUGUST - Since the year began Convair built eleven B-24J bombers each day in the factories along Pacific Highway, exactly 2,792. Each bomber required pilots and crew to test fly it and take it to a modification center.

SEPTEMBER - Convair began using radio-controlled free-flight models to aid in the design of full scale seaplanes, supervised by Ernest Stout, Staff Engineer for Hydrodynamics.

OCTOBER - In anticipation of the end of the war, Harry Woodhead, President of Convair, advocated seven demobilization steps, (1) adequate unemployment insurance, (2) transport of workers to new jobs or bona fide homes, (3) prompt contract termination, (4) advance notice of cutbacks, (5) earliest resumption of civil aircraft manufacturing, (6) intelligent surplus-aircraft disposal, (7) continuation the of college air training program started before the war.

NOVEMBER - Workmen completed Lindbergh Field's new 8,500-foot runway, more than twice the length of the original runway. Convair and the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics paid the bill.

DECEMBER - The Solar Aircraft Company contract backlog included exhaust manifolds for personal planes, and atomic bomb parts.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1944

DECEMBER - The San Diego City Directory listed several aviation companies in addition to the familiar Convair, Ryan, Rohr, and Solar. They include Engel Aircraft Specialties, Aviation Service Company, Pacific Airmotive, Weaver Aircraft Corporation, Wilford Brothers, Sperry Gyroscope Company, Langley Corporation, and Monarch Tool and Instrument Company.

DECEMBER - Earl Prudden, Vice President and General Manager of the Ryan School of Aviation, wrote in a leading magazine article, "Keep Those Contract Schools Going."

DECEMBER 23 - San Diego airman Donald N. Sharp died in an AAF airplane over Germany. The new Sharp Hospital would get his name in 1955.

DURING THE YEAR - At least fifty different aircraft carriers dropped anchor at San Diego; no one who saw them forgot their camouflaged paint schemes. Some were shiny new from shipyards around the country. Others arrived rusted and worn from battling the Atlantic. After training and loading squadrons they left for war with the Japanese. A few were noncombatants, shuttling between Honolulu or the South Pacific and San Diego returning damaged airplanes, loading new ones and out again.

~~DURING THE YEAR~~ - Thousands of naval airmen formed hundreds of squadrons at San Diego in all types of the latest aircraft. Accidents happened. Eleven died, 23 hurt when a Navy bomber crashed a barracks on the Coronado strand in February; 18 died, 12 hurt in June, when a Navy bomber struck a building at NAAS Miramar; test pilot Bob Kerlinger died in the crash of his experimental Ryan Fireball on October 13; in November six died in a Navy bomber crash.

- ~~During year~~ - Brodie landing - 500 successful launch/landings - LSTs - Carrier pilots planes ~~ft~~ in training on land and ship (LST-776?).

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1945

JANUARY - Carrier Training Squadron, Pacific established on North Island for training Carrier Air Groups from Pearl Harbor and San Diego.

JANUARY - By 1945 MCAS Miramar had one 3000 foot, and two 6000 foot runways where soldiers marched in 1918 at Camp Kearny.

FEBRUARY 24 - Back from the war the day before aboard KWAJALEIN (CVE-98), Carrier Air Group 20's three squadrons, VF-20, VB-20, and VT-20, mustered for a medals award ceremony at North Island. VF-20 lost 23 pilots killed in action overseas and received the Presidential Unit Citation.

FEBRUARY - Eight Mexican Expeditionary Air Force pilots arrived at North Island for training in the Douglas Dauntless.

FEBRUARY - Ryan Aeronautical Corporation carried $13,000,000 worth of contract backlog for exhaust manifolds.

MARCH 26 - Ryan test pilot Mickey McGuire died in a Fireball crash five miles northeast of MCAS, Miramar.

MARCH - Navy Fighter Squadron 66 received new Ryan FR-1 Fireballs at North Island.

APRIL 5 - Ryan test pilot Lake bailed out of his Fireball which plunged into a parked PB4Y on Lindbergh Field.

APRIL - Rohr modified four Convair PB2Y-3s to PB2Y-5F/5Z for flag officer use.

MAY 1 - RANGER hoisted six VF-66 Ryan Fireballs aboard during ~~for~~ three days of carrier qualifications. The tricycled fighters broke their nose gear one after the other. Pilots and planes went back to the drawing board.

MAY 21 - At North Island VF-19 received the latest fighters, tiny but terrific Grumman F8F-1 Bearcats.

MAY - Convair test pilot Joe Rust practiced JATO take-offs from San Diego bay in a PB2Y-5 Coronado.

MAY - Convair's Model 39 airliner began CAA tests. It had a PB4Y-2 tail and B-24 Davis wing.

JUNE 30 - Convair began building one hundred Lark missiles.

JUNE - Convair employed 14,000 people compared to 44,000 in 1943. Women comprised nearly forty percent of the workforce.

JULY 28 - USS MATANIKAU (CVE-101) left San Diego after sharing training carrier duties with RANGER all year.

June - Western States Flying Service moved to La Mesa Airport (Old Convair and Hall Airport from Arizona, owner T.B. Smiley, Instructor Whitey Lewis with Aeronca, Culver Cadet, Stinson SR-9E, Cessna Skyboy, Stearmans, Fairchilds etc.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1945

JULY - Government-surplus Ryan PT-22 trainers sold for $875 to $2,400 at Concord, California. Private pilots had already bought more than 11,000 surplus government airplanes.

JULY - The Army Air Force announced Convair B-32 Dominator bomb raids on Japan.

JULY - All companies with war contracts learned that they would be cancelled on VJ-Day. Research and Development contracts remained in effect.

JULY ~ ED LEISER RECEIVED 3 HRS FLYING LESSONS IN PIPER CUBS — etc, La Mesa Apt. LEWIS mgr.

AUGUST 16 - Perhaps the first Magic Carpet ship to arrive in San Diego, CARD (ACV-11) carried war veterans from the South Pacific. Many Magic Carpet ships made the shuttle to West Coast ports until the last vet got home in 1946.

AUGUST 29 - The first Allied planes to land in Tokyo Bay since 1941 were San Diego-built Consolidated PB2Y-5F Coronados. They carried Admiral Nimitz and his staff to the surrender ceremonies.

AUGUST - The San Diego Flying Club started flying again with a surplus Interstate L-6 and a Porterfield 35-W from Gibbs Airport.

AUGUST - Local airports cleaned up their strips, turned on the utilities, hooked up the telephone, painted a new sign and gave every pilot a green light. Gibbs Airport, La Mesa Airport, Peik Airport, La Pressa Airport and Jamacha Airport were the first. Business was slow.

AUGUST - Convair announced the twin-engine airliner Model 110.

AUGUST - By the end of the war Rohr delivered 38,000 power packs -engine plus nacelle.

AUGUST - Convair built the last of 6,725 B-24 bombers in San Diego since the first one in 1939. ~~Over three hundred~~ Convair test pilots picked up payroll checks during the peak period. 555

SEPTEMBER 30 - RANGER (CV-4), the Navy's first "from-the-keel-up" aircraft carrier, completed a year's carrier qualification training for Navy pilots in San Diego. It left to be decommissioned on the East Coast.

SEPTEMBER - On VJ-Day 2,538 new airplanes sat at North Island waiting to go overseas.

SEPTEMBER - Lindbergh Field dedicated a new 8,750 foot runway, longest in the west.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1945

SEPTEMBER - SANDPIPER (AVP-9) and SWAN (AVP-7), small seaplane tenders in San Diego in the early thirties, completed brief visits enroute to the auction block.

SEPTEMBER - A Convair team on government contract tried to determine if missiles could be designed to travel 5,000 miles.

OCTOBER 18 - The Navy decommissioned VF-66 and transferred the pilots and Fireballs to VF-41.

NOVEMBER 8 - USS HOGAN (DD-178), a 1919 four-stack destroyer, spent the last day of its Navy career off the coast of San Diego, waiting to be sunk by navy divebombers. It was a better way to go for an old ship than being transformed into automobiles.

NOVEMBER - VF-41 pilots qualified in Ryan Fireballs aboard WAKE ISLAND (CVE-65) out of North Island. Ensign West made the first jet landing on an aircraft carrier after his plane's engine failed following a normal catapult launch.

DECEMBER - Consairway's contract expired.

DURING THE YEAR - Consair Flyers started again at Gibbs Airport and is still active.

The CAP opened an aviation school for young people in the Ford Building.

Convair built thirty-eight RY-3 cargo versions of the Privateer.

Some Navy pilots thought the tricycle-geared Fireball too hot to handle on carriers. To change their minds, veteran pilot Betty Gillies flew one of two Fireballs from Ryan to North Island. They made a fast break low over the field and circled to land. It startled a few Naval aviators to see the ferry pilot in the new FR-1 turn into a pretty lady.

Oldtimers recall the North Island recall plane, a checkerboard-painted Hellcat.

Some Navy airplanes at San Diego during the year:

Beechcraft GB-2, BUNO 23753
Beech JRB-4, BUNO 44587
Douglas R4D-6, BUNO 50776
Culver TD2C, BUNO 75960
Convair PBY-6A, BUNO 63995
Grumman F6F-5, BUNO 72820

By the end of the year civilian flying was well established. Surplus Fairchild PT-19, Stearman PT-17, N3N many, Ryan Cubs from Arizona, Ryan PT-22, Taylcraft, Aeronca, Stinson 10S, Stinson SR-9E, Kinner Playboy, Culver Cadet, Interstate, Fairchild Sky Ranger, Porterfield, and Arrow Sport.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1946

JANUARY - The end of the war meant getting laid off. The general aviation business began again. Some new companies: Plosser-Friedkin Flight School and Kelley School of Aeronautics at Lindbergh Field; Speer Flying Service at Gillespie Field and El Cajon Airport; Borderland Airport a mile north of San Ysidro, and National City Airport in the flats north of Chula Vista.

JANUARY - The Fleet Air Electronics Training Unit, Pacific headquartered at NAAS Ream Field.

JANUARY - American Airlines ordered one hundred twin-engined Convair 240s, an expensively redesigned Model 110.

See next page >

JANUARY - The carrier SHANGRI LA (CV-38) arrived with three Sikorsky HOS-1 helicopters, perhaps the first choppers in town.

JANUARY - Convair submitted an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) proposal to the Army Air Force, the MX-774.

FEBRUARY 4 - You could tell the war was over. The AFL went on strike and Convair closed the plant.

FEBRUARY - The Naval Air Reserve Training Unit, NARTU, began on North Island.

MARCH - Convair sent two models of their supersonic jet project to Wright Field in Ohio.

See next page >

APRIL 19 - Convair got an AAF ICBM contract.

MAY - The Army Air Force announced Convair the winner of the supersonic interceptor competition. Detail design began on the XP-92, a delta-winged jet fighter.

JUNE - The Treasury Department regained control of the Coast Guard from the Navy Department.

JULY 4 - The County Fair featured two unscheduled aviation accidents. One mid-air collision occurred with one pilot parachuting safely and the other landing safely. A P-80 crashed a half mile from the grandstand killing the Air Force pilot.

JULY 9 - First flight from Lindbergh Field of the Convair 110, prototype of the 240, with pilot Russ Rogers was a success.

JULY - Convair began flying their Model 116 flying automobile from Lindbergh Field, a pusher design by P.T.Hall.

AUGUST 1 - The seaplane tender USS ST.GEORGE (AV-16) decommissioned and entered the growing Reserve Fleet in San Diego, retirement home for dozens of ships of many types and careers.

Aug 21 - First flight Robt McCreery MR-1 by D.T. Kelley fm BF. no market. Canard 2 seater

Spratt or Convair Model 103
Guppicar Convair Model 111

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1946

NOVEMBER - Convair got approval to begin building the XP-92, their delta-wing jet.

NOVEMBER - Convair conducted the first static test of the MX-774 experimental missile, location unknown.

NOVEMBER - Al Conover flew the first test flight of the Ryan XF2R Dark Shark from Lindbergh.

DECEMBER - Solar Aircraft Company worked on WAC Corporal rocket motors for the Army.

DECEMBER 24 - Western Air Lines lost all twelve aboard their plane that crashed in the Laguna Mountains enroute San Diego.

DURING THE YEAR - Tugs towed bargeloads of Navy planes to sea. Sailors deep-sixed them.

The flight line at MCAS Miramar included the Grumman F7F-3N Tigercat and the Northrop F2T-1 Black Widow, a famous night fighter during the war, a lowly trainer by then.

A number of Convair TBY Sea Wolf airplanes parked on West Beach at North Island.

The Navy decommissioned NAAS Brown Field.

Convair designed the XB-46, a twin-jet bomber and the L-13 liaison plane.

Airplane types at the local airports: Luscombe A-65, Taylorcraft DC-65, Piper J-3C, Aeronca Champ, Stinson 105, Ercoupe, Cessna 140, plus surplus Ryan PT-22, Stearman PT-17, Vultee BT-13, North American AT-6, and Vultee BT-15.

For sale on El Cajon Boulevard: Ryan PT-22s.

The company tried making metal caskets, but when cost overcame profit they buried the idea. Someone's corny slogan was: "Flyin' or Dyin', See Ryan."

JANUARY - Western States Flying Service moved from La Mesa Airport to El Cajon Airport with a dirt strip parallel to Greenfield east of Magnolia.
MARCH - WSFS sold to Speer, Whitey Lewis chief instructor etc. Lewis set up GI flight training program.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1947

JANUARY 22 - One thousand people stopped to see Ryan test pilot Bill Dorsey approach Lindbergh Field in an FR-1 with the wheels up and make a safe belly landing.

JANUARY - Rohr Aircraft Corporation making a radical canard two-seater streamlined pusher monoplane for civilians. There was no market. Rohr-McCrary MR-1

JANUARY - Ryan got a USN contract to study the directional control of jet engine blast. The results led to Vertical Take Off aircraft like the Ryan X-13 Vertijet years later.

JANUARY - The Navy leased Brown Field to the county.

FEBRUARY 4 - The one and only Convair XB-46, an experimental four-jet engined bomber, made its first test flight with Sam Shannon in the pilot seat.

FEBRUARY - The Navy ordered Ryan KDA-1 remote control target drones. The Army did, too, and designated them XQ-2.

MARCH 16 - Convair 240 completed the first flight from Lindbergh Field, the first pressurized twin-engine airplane.

MARCH 19 - Max Black, the County Aviation Director, signed a five-year lease with the Navy and opened Gillespie Field to commercial traffic.

JUNE - Convair suspended interest in flying wings after the Air Force cancelled their XB-53 proposal, a giant canard with three J-35 jet engines.

JUNE - The AAF dropped support of the Convair MX-774 rocket. The company completed three for testfiring.

JUNE - Ryan shelved a helicopter and other designs after buying the rights to produce the North American Navion at the flyaway factory price of $7,750.

JULY - Convair dropped the 240 designation in favor of Convair-Liner for its new airplane, on sale for $360,000.

JULY - Solar had $700,000 worth of work on Douglas C-54 and Convair PB4Y-2 manifolds, and Allison turbojet engine parts.

AUGUST - If you needed a commercial airplane you could rent the surplus Douglas B-18 at Brown Field from Adolph Dieterle.

SEPTEMBER - Convair had orders for 181 Convair-Liners but they still lost money during the year while learning how expensive it was to build airplanes in peacetime.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1947

SEPTEMBER - Atlas Corporation acquired control of Convair. ~~One of the board members was Ben O. Howard.~~ The word ATLAS would remain after the Corporation sold out years later.

SEPTEMBER - San Diego Flying Club held a spot landing and balloon busting contest at Sweetwater Navy Strip, flying over from their new base at La Pressa Airport with a Piper J-3, Cessna 120, and Cessna 140.

OCTOBER - Ryan delivered the first of 1,200 Navions.

OCTOBER - Convair static-tested the MX-774 rocket engines bolted to a pad out on Point Loma.

NOVEMBER 18 - The Convair Model 118 roadable airplane made an out-of-gas landing near National City. The extensively damaged airplane never flew again. Convair lost interest. ~~P.T.Hall got the two airplanes and parts and stored them at Gillespie Field.~~

NOVEMBER 18 - Fighter Squadron VF-5A received new airplanes, the North American FJ-1 Fury, at San Diego.

NOVEMBER 23 - On a local flight from Gibbs Airport in a Luscombe 8E, NC 2307K, Miles Blaine watched the first flight of Convair's huge six-engine XC-99 from Lindbergh Field piloted by Russell Rogers and B.A.Erickson.

NOVEMBER - Convair delivered over twenty L-13 liaison planes to the Air Force at the rate of one per day.

NOVEMBER - Rohr hired 500 people to work on Boeing B-50 parts.

DECEMBER 12 - Navy pilot C.C.March completed the first trans-continental ferry flight of a helicopter at North Island after a week's flying from Lakehurst, New Jersey. VU-7 got the new Sikorsky HO3S-1.

DECEMBER - The Douglas DC-3, DC-4, and DC-6 airliners at Lindbergh Field belonged to United, Western and American Airlines.

DECEMBER - San Diego got joint use of NAAS Miramar whenever fog closed Lindbergh Field. Naval personnel manned the control tower, and crash crew. The CAA approved.

DECEMBER - American Airlines cancelled 25 of their original 100-plane order of Convair-Liners. Merry Christmas.

DECEMBER - Ryan got $1,070,000 from the Air Force for design, development and manufacture of the Firebird air-to-air missile.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1947

DURING THE YEAR - Friedkin bought out Plosser, his partner, and changed the name on his building at Lindbergh Field to Friedkin School of Aeronautics.

San Diego pilots Wiberg and Parker towed two war-surplus Pratt-Read TG-32 gliders behind a Stearman from Americus, Georgia to San Diego to sell them.

A few other airplane types in San Diego included the Convair OY-1 Sentinel, Ryan XF2R-1 Dark Shark, North American SNJ-6, Grumman TBM-3E with VA-55, Vought FG-1D, and Douglas JD-1 and Grumman J2F-6 with VU-7.

Lindbergh Field personnel watched two more first test flights. Sam Shannon flew the Convair Model 118 Roadable on its first test flight and Russ Rogers piloted the Convair 240.

Accidents included two Navy fatalities in a crash off Ocean Beach, another Navy plane crash off the coast with nine missing and two rescued, and an Interstate L-6 crash after engine failure on take-off.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1948

JANUARY - American Airlines received their first San Diego-built Convair-Liner in Oklahoma.

JANUARY - The Friedkin School of Aeronautics at Lindbergh Field taught students in three Aeronca Champs, and two Luscombes, with instructors Gordon Tinker and J.B. Plosser and student pilots like ex-Navy Lieutenant Paul Adams.

FEBRUARY 2 - Bernard Roehrig died. In 1909 he built and flew an airplane in Imperial Beach.

FEBRUARY 20 - Convair pilot W.J. Martin continued flight testing the Model 118 Flying Auto, NX90850. while the company considered whether or not to start production.

FEBRUARY 23 - The Navy held a public demonstration of the North American FJ-1 Fury at San Diego.

MARCH 10 - VF-51 conducted carrier suitability trials for the North American FJ-1 Fury aboard USS BOXER off the coast.

MARCH - Convair made merger offer to North American Aviation.

APRIL - You could pick up your new Ryan Navion in maroon, tan, green or blue.

MAY - The CAA considered letting responsible companies certificate their own aircraft, reducing overall production costs.

MAY - American Airlines started the first Convair-Liner service between Washington DC and New York.

MAY - Convair worked on a flying LST design to fly in 1949.

MAY - Convair completed static tests of the MX-774 rocket engine at Point Loma, an experimental ICBM project for the Air Force. It developed into the Atlas years later.

MAY - Solar designed and produced afterburners for the Vought XF6U Pirate, the company's first jet fighter.

JUNE 9 - First "flight" of the Convair Model 7002, XF-92A, at Muroc. Convair's Chief of Experimental Flight Test, Ellis D. "Sam" Shannon, got it up to a few feet for a few miles during taxi tests. Whoops. Next flight on September 28.

JUNE - Convair decided not to produce the Flying Auto. P.T. Hall retired from Convair,got the manufacturing rights and custody of the airplanes and parts. He stored them at Gillespie Field in October. (See 1984.)

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1948

JUNE - The Air Force cancelled a radical Convair delta-wing ramjet. The full-scale wood mockup revealed the cockpit capsule within the nose air intake.

JUNE - La Motte Cohu resigned from TWA and became President and General Manager of Consolidated-Vultee Aircraft Corporation, replacing Harry Woodhead.

JULY 13 - After a truck ride from San Diego the Convair MX-774 ICBM completed its first flight at White Sands, New Mexico.

JULY 31 - During the week American Airlines received three Convair-Liners and Continental received one, the forty-first since American got the first one in January.

JULY - Isaac Laddon, Executive Vice-President of CVAC, retired.

JULY - Convair's Stinson plant in Indiana closed.

JULY - Western Air Lines gave a demonstration of San Diego-Seattle Convair-Liner service to start a schedule September 1.

JULY - Ryan got a $2,500,000 Air Force contract for 158 L-17B Navions for the Army and National Guard.

JULY - The public first heard of the CVAC Skate, a 2 or 3-man long-range fighter jet seaplane prototype to fly in the spring.

AUGUST - Three classic flying boats rested on Lindbergh Field. The Boeing 314 opened the world's first transatlantic scheduled airmail service by heavier-than-air craft in 1939. The three old Clippers carried For Sale signs.

SEPTEMBER 2 - Photo squadron VPP-1 became VP-61, still based at San Diego in 1986.

SEPTEMBER - The Institute of Aeronautical Sciences began building a new headquarters by Harbor Drive west of Ryan.

SEPTEMBER - A training squadron of Lockheed TO-1s formed at North Island. The jet was an advanced trainer developed from the famous Shooting Star fighter.

SEPTEMBER - Convair got a $30-million Air Force contract for thirty-six T-29 military Convair-Liners.

OCTOBER 2-3 - Visitors to the Science and Industry Show in the Federal Building at Balboa Park saw a 1926 Ryan M-1.

OCTOBER - Convair formed Convair Equipment Company to lease Convair-Liners. Production was 28 aircraft a month.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1948

NOVEMBER 29 - Convair sold Stinson to Piper.

NOVEMBER - Ryan had an Air Force contract for Boeing Stratocruiser fuselage sections.

NOVEMBER - Ryan delivered the 500th Navion, a total of 1,611 including those from North American.

DECEMBER 2 - Convair fired their third and last MX-774 at White Sands. Their next missile involvement was in 1951.

DECEMBER - Atlas Corporation bought 65,900 shares of Convair stock, a significant number.

DURING THE YEAR - Kenneth Friedkin began Friedkin Aeronautics at Lindbergh Field with a surplus Cessna UC-78 for charter passenger service.

Flying from its base at La Pressa Airport, San Diego Flying Club held several spot-landing and balloon busting contests at Sweetwater Navy Strip late in the year.

Three Convair engineers began building a tiny airplane in a Mission Beach garage during their spare time. Ken Coward, Karl Montijo, and Bill Chana named it Weebee.

USS ANTIETAM (CV-36), BOXER (CV-21), TARAWA (CV-40), PRINCETON (CV-37), and VALLEY FORGE (CV-45) all operated in the San Diego area.

Navy Helicopter Squadron ONE transferred to NAAS Miramar, flying the Sikorsky HO3S.

Ryan tested their Air Force Firebird missile at Alamagordo.

Ryan produced Firebee target drones for the Air Force and the Navy.

Three airlines served Lindbergh Field, United, American and Western.

Some other airplanes at civilian airports included the Cessna 120, 140 and 170, Piper J-3, and Taylorcraft BL. Navy pilots flew the JRB, SNB, R4D, R5D, SNJ, TBM and many more.

Chuck Wolfe opened Wolfe's Airpark on the mesa just south of the Otay River and east of Beyer Way. San Diego Airpark opened in Clairemont. San Diego Skyport opened at Lindbergh Field for seaplanes.

A Navy jet lost a wing off La Jolla and the pilot parachuted safely on August 10. A VALLEY FORGE F8F pilot died in a mid-air collision west of La Jolla on September 2.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1949

JANUARY 1 - The Civil Aeronautics Administration modified civil aircraft markings. It eliminated the prefixes NC, NX, and NL. The new marking consisted of only the letter N followed by the registration number.

JANUARY 17 - The San Diego Junior Chamber of Commerce and Breise Flying Service put on the Air Thrills of 1949 at Brown Field.

JANUARY - Convair Leasing Corporation changed its name to Airfleets, Inc.

JANUARY - The Navy commissioned a new photography squadron, VC-61, flying Grumman F6F-5P Hellcats, F8F-2P Bearcats, and Vought F4U-4P Corsairs from NAAS Miramar.

FEBRUARY 12 - At Brown Field, prone pilot Karl Montijo flew the homebuilt Coward WeeBee on its first test flight.

FEBRUARY - Convair recently sold the USAF on a contract to equip all 134 B-36 bombers built or on order with four jet engines.

MARCH - Ryan tested its Firebird missile at Alamagordo, New Mexico, the first Air Force air-to-air missile, built to aid in development of better missiles, not for production.

MARCH - Two helicopters, a Sikorsky HO3S and a Bell from NAAS Miramar, landed in a Chula Vista school yard as a one-day training aid for the children.

APRIL 1 - Western Airlines began flying Convair-Liners on all coastal schedules.

APRIL 5 - VO-2 decommissioned, perhaps the last of the Navy's observation squadrons; first named Spotting Squadron Three in 1920 at North Island.

APRIL 24 - Two fatalities didn't stop the American Gold Cup Races at Brown Field on Sunday. Bob Heisel, 24, died when his Pitts Pellet crashed in the first heat. Forty-nine year old veteran race pilot, Art Chester, lost his life in the crash of his butterfly-tailed Swee-Pea. During the day the Fullerton Flyers from Santa Ana refueled before the crowd, pouring gas out of tin cans handed up from a Jeep to their plane, Sunkist Lady, setting an endurance record of almost 1000 hours before landing at Santa Ana.

APRIL - Ryan began an Army/Air Force contract for 22 Firebee target drones.

APRIL - Convair reported its first profit since World War TWO.

MAY 1 - COMNAVAIRPAC, the Commander of Naval air forces in the Pacific, moved from Pearl Harbor to North Island.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1949

MAY 6 - Ken Friedkin started weekly San Diego to Oakland service in a leased Douglas DC-3, NC60256, marked Pacific Southwest Airlines, with pilots Leo Leonard and Bud Plosser. The service hasn't stopped yet.

MAY 6 - California-Central Airlines started Burbank-San Diego service with Douglas DC-3s.

MAY 14 - Convair delivered the Model 7002 to the Air Force (designated XF-92A in June and cancelled the same month).

MAY - Interested customers missed their chance to get a Ryan Navion for $10,965. New price: $11,985.

JUNE 1 - The Powder Puff Derby, a women's airplane race, started from San Diego to Miami with sixteen pilots.

JUNE - The first Grumman F9F Panthers in San Diego joined VF-51's North American FJ-1s.

JULY 15 - The Navy's huge Lockheed R-60 Constitution, gross weight 184,000 pounds, landed its double-deck fuselage at North Island.

JULY 20 - Convair tested the L-13 on floats on San Diego bay.

JULY 21 - The Institute of Aeronautical Sciences dedicated their new buildings at San Diego and Los Angeles.

AUGUST 31 - Ten men died in a PBM crash off San Diego.

SEPTEMBER 22 - The Convair T-29, 91910, completed its first test flight at Lindbergh Field, with pilot R.C. Loomis, and copilot Sam Shannon.

OCTOBER 4 - A Lockheed P2V-3 Neptune flew 4,800 miles nonstop from Midway Island to North Island.

NOVEMBER - Convair began work on a $600,000 subcontract from Boeing on jet pod parts and other detail parts of the B-47.

NOVEMBER - An unofficial report revealed engineering studies for a Ryan Twin-Navion; not committed to prototype production.

DECEMBER - Fred Rohr and associates bought Rohr Aircraft Corporation from Newport Steel Corporation for five million dollars plus.

DECEMBER - Don Hall, designer of the Ryan Spirit of St. Louis, went to work at NAS San Diego.

DECEMBER - Convair entered the competition for a long range strategic transport with redesign of the XC-99.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1949

DURING THE YEAR - The CAA licensed Bud and Betty Gillies' private landing strip beside their home one and a quarter miles west of San Diego State College near Fairmount Avenue above Mission Valley, until 1960.

Ryan began building Boeing C-97 aft fuselages.

A salvage company dismembered three Boeing 314 Clippers on Lindbergh Field.

The Fletcher Hills private airport began and lasted for three years. At a temporary field near Mission Bay planes flew from Silvergate Speedway during production of a motion picture.

A Martin JRM-2 Mars carried record passenger loads.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| February | 11: | 202 men Alameda-SD |
| " | 11: | 218 men SD-Alameda |
| March | 4: | 263 men SD-Alameda |
| May | 19: | 301 men Alameda-SD |

The Convair XP5Y-1 rolled out of the factory in April and waited for four Allison T-40 engines; in November it entered the bay to test the hull, still without engines.

At Balboa Park an aircraft mechanics school began in the Ford Building supervised by Instructor John Coats and the CAA. The two and a half year course lasted until 1959.

Some of the other airplanes in San Diego:

Civil

Aeronca
Cessna 140
Douglas DC-4
Ercoupe
Fairchild 24
Luscombe 8E
Piper J-3C
Piper Clipper

Military

Grumman F9F-3
Grumman TBM-3E
Lockheed TO-1
North American SNJ-6

~~1950~~ 1950

During April - July
Dr. Vincent Flynn
learned to fly the
Hiller OH-12 at
Spec - instructor
Walter Lewis -
first locally
trained helo
pilot ? ? ? How
about CEMS?

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1950

JANUARY - Convair sent a Convair-Liner on a South American tour.

- W.E.White finished a 400-pound homebuilt monoplane.

MARCH - Convair began making an Allison turboprop Convair-Liner.

> MARCH White, Lewis learned to fly Speer's Hillers 1944-12 - first SD to fly helo?

APRIL 18 - The Convair XP5Y-1 completed its first test flight from San Diego bay with success, test pilot Sam Shannon.

APRIL 20 - Bill Chana flew the WeeBee on its last flight from Gibbs Airport. It had flown in Ireland, England and at the National Air Races.

APRIL - The Convair B-36 jet engine pod installation program switched from Ft. Worth to San Diego.

- Solar Aircraft produced a small gas turbine, GE J-47 and Westinghouse J-34 engine parts, and tailpipes for the Lockheed F-80 and North American B-45.

MAY 20 - San Diego dedicated Montgomery Field, formerly Gibbs Field. Present were guests James and Jane Montgomery, brother and sister of John Montgomery, for whom the field was named(see 1883).

MAY 20 - San Diego dedicated the John H. Montgomery Monument and park on the hill in Otay where Montgomery made man's first successful glider flight in 1883. A stainless-steel protected Convair B-32 wing panel symbolized the achievement, its tip reaching for the zenith.

MAY - The Convair XF-92A arrived at Convair by truck, damaged in an emergency landing at Muroc.

JUNE - Convair stopped production on the Convair-Liner. The all-new Turbo-Liner would replace it.

JULY - North Island personnel prepared stored aircraft for service in the Korean war: Vought F4Us, Convair PB4Ys, and Grumman TBMs.

- Marine Air Group 33 departed North Island for Korea.

AUGUST 24 - CVE-88 CAPE ESPERANCE and CVE-86 SITKOH BAY left San Diego for Korea with Vought F4U and Grumman F7F day and night-fighters and their Marine pilots.

AUGUST - The Convair XP5Y-1 set a new record for turboprop aircraft, eight hours, and six minutes over the Southern California coast.

## 1950

AUGUST - Ten naval air reserve squadrons arrived at North Island on active duty and ready to go to war; two attack, one scout, and seven fighter squadrons.

SEPTEMBER - Ryan made nose sections for Aerobee rockets on an Aerojet subcontract.

OCTOBER - A photographer snapped a crane removing an R4360 engine from Convair B-36A, 492040, at Lindbergh Field, part of the two-year program to modernize the Peacemakers. Many San Diegans remember the ground shaking as the six-engine giants flew over. Several times the sound from their huge power plants broke showroom windows at Dryer's Furniture Company next to Lindbergh Field.

- The Navy changed the Convair P5Y designation to R3Y-1 and ordered less than ten of the seaplanes named Tradewind.

- VC-61 received the first Grumman F9F-2P photo planes. They replaced their Vought F4U-4Ps on the next deployment.

NOVEMBER - Convair leased the IAS building on Harbor Drive for expanded flight and field operations management.

- The Air Force 4th Interceptor Wing from Wilmington, Delaware landed their North American F-86A Sabrejets at North Island for shipment overseas with a number of Republic F-84s to combat MiG-15 interceptors over Korea.

DECEMBER 6 - Just back from Korean waters on December 1, USS VALLEY FORGE (CV-45) departed North Island on emergency orders with Carrier Air Group TWO, with the Vought F4U-4s of VF-24.

DECEMBER 29 - First flight of the Convair Turbo-Liner with pilot Loomis from Lindbergh Field ended at NAAS Miramar after an engine control wire vibrated loose.

DECEMBER - Convair reversed their June decision to stop building Convair-Liners, and continued making the CV-240A.

- A Rohr Aircraft Corporation advertisement featured the Chase C-122, Boeing C-97, Lockheed Constellation and the Convair-Liner, aircraft for which they had subcontracts.

DURING THE YEAR - Ryan got an Air Force contract to build a jet-engined vertical takeoff aircraft.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1950

DURING THE YEAR - The CAB gave Southwest Airways new routes including San Diego and El Centro.

- Pacific Southwest Airlines fleet totaled four Douglas DC-3/C-47.

- The ladies' Powder Puff Derby took off from Lindbergh Field.

- Two Marine fighters collided off San Diego killing the pilots on April 20. On September 14, two men were safe and one missing in a Navy bomber crash.

- Between June and December after the Korean War began, San Diegans first welcomed then waved goodbye to aircraft carriers and seaplane tenders with a frequency that recalled the recent World War. An incomplete list:

BADOENG STRAIT (CVE-116)
BATAAN (CVL-29)
BOXER (CV-21)
CAPE ESPERANCE (CVE-88)
CURTISS (AV-4)

FABIUS (ARVA-5)
GARDINERS BAY (AVP-39)
PHILIPPINE SEA (CV-47)
SALISBURY SOUND (AV-13)
SICILY (CVE-118)

SITKOH BAY (CVE-86)
SUISUN (AVP-53)
VALLEY FORGE (CV-45)
WINDHAM BAY (CVE-92)

From the San Diego City Directory:

Lindbergh Field
- Flying Tiger Line
- San Diego Sky Freight, Inc.
- Slick Airways
- Standard Air Cargo
- Swift Air Service

Montgomery Field
- Gibbs Flying Service

San Diego Air Park(in Clairemont)
- Mission Bay Flying Service

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1951

JANUARY 16 - Convair got government support to resume studies on the MX-774 missile (1948), and for an overall systems study of the MX1593. The Atlas rocket resulted from the studies.

JANUARY 19 - Another contract for Convair; this time for two XF2Y Seadarts, jet-propelled seaplanes with water skiis.

JANUARY 23 - Convair reactivated the Atlas ICBM project.

JANUARY 26 - The Early Birds held a reunion on North Island.

JANUARY - The CAA fixed Air Defense Identification Zones and placed San Diego in the Los Angeles zone. It required pilots to file flight plans if flying in the zone.

- Convair delivered the first modified B-36B to the Air Force. The local company installed four J-47 jet engines and other new equipment at Lindbergh Field.

MARCH 31 - The Navy awarded Convair a contract to manufacture two VTOL aircraft, the turboprop-powered XFY Pogo.

MARCH - Naval planners decided that Number TWO Convair XP5Y, being readied to fly, would be a minelayer.

- Convair test-flew the Turbo-Liner at Brown Field.

APRIL - Ryan completed a 14,000 square foot hangar-storehouse at Lindbergh Field.

May 6 - Newly recommissioned aircraft carrier BON HOMME RICHARD (CV-31) arrived at North Island. Four days later and after loading the Panther jets, Vought Corsairs, Douglas ADs, a Grumman TBM-3R COD Det. and a couple Sikorsky helicopters of Air Group 102, the carrier cast off for Korean waters.

MAY - Ryan Aeronautical Corporation stopped Navion production.

JUNE - Ryan went into volume production on exhaust cones for the Wright J-65 engine, Westinghouse jet engine components, and exhaust systems for Convair-Liners.

- Under Navy contract, Slick Airways flew Curtiss C-46 cargo planes into San Diego on a daily cross-country including San Francisco and New York.

- Ryan started work on a new contract making Boeing KC-97 refueling pods.

- The Convair XP5Y Tradewinds completed a four hour, ten minute flight without engine problems. The troubled seaplane needed the compliment.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1951

JULY 20 - After getting a new engine at San Diego in May, the Convair XF-92A completed a 34-minute flight at Muroc under the piloting of Chuck Yeager.

SEPTEMBER 1 - The CAA made pilot identification cards mandatory.

SEPTEMBER - Convair began work on an Air Force contract for an experimental high performance interceptor prototype, competing with a similar contract to Republic.

- California-Central Airlines began replacing their Douglas DC-3s with Martin 202s in and out of Lindbergh Field.

OCTOBER - A PSA Douglas DC-3 crashlanded after takeoff from Burbank. That left three DC-3s in the inventory.

- After a 20-death crash in Colorado the CAA banned aerobatics without direct radio control, delayed parachute jumps, dogfights, crazy flying, crashes on purpose, and air shows that did not contribute directly to advancement of and public confidence in aviation.

- Ryan got a Firestone order to increase rocket motor production ten-fold.

- The Air Force also put Slick Airways on the payroll, sending the C-46 and DC-6A cargo planes into San Diego three times a week.

- Rohr got orders to make Fairchild C-123 power packs.

DURING THE YEAR - In a photograph of Lindbergh Field is a Convair-Liner from American Airlines, Martin Mariners at the Coast Guard Air Station, and thirteen Convair B-36 bombers.

- Convair employment topped 19,000. Continental Air Lines, National Air Lines, Texas Company, Arabian-American Oil Company, United Air Lines, United Aircraft Corporation, Delta Airlines, Mid-Continent Airlines, Philippine Air Lines, and Chicago and Southern Airlines ordered over 130 Convair-Liners; the Air Force wanted one hundred T-29s.

- Russell Rogers flew the initial test flight of the Convair 340 from Lindbergh Field.

- Waldo Waterman began work on a flying "motor-cycle" to be called the Aerobile, an updated version of his 1937 Arrowbile roadable airplane.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1951

DURING THE YEAR - San Diegans read of the death of B. Franklin Mahoney. His company built the Spirit of St. Louis in 1927 at San Diego.

- CDR C.A.Crabill logged flight time in twenty-two different Beech SNB-5s in San Diego.

- The Navy stopped using the Rosedale practice field (Balboa and Charger). Linda Vista Airport stopped operations at its location east of, and just across the highway from NAAS Miramar. Airports in use:

Brown Field
Fletcher Hills field.
Gillespie Field
Gillies field
Jamacha Airport
La Pressa Airport
Lindbergh Field
Miramar Navy auxiliary
Montgomery Field
NAAS Ream Field
NAS Miramar
NAS North Island
National City Airport
Peik Airport
Sweetwater Dam
Sweetwater Springs Airport
Torrey Pines Glider Port
Wolfe's Airpark

- On January 9, two F9F-2 Panthers flamed out. One reached Miramar, the other landed short of the runway. Their squadron, VF-781, was the first Navy fighter squadron stationed at NAAS Miramar. A Martin Mariner crashed at sea near San Diego on November 27, and killed eleven men.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1952

JANUARY 18 - The Convair 340 completed its first flight from Lindbergh Field. Aeronaves Airline ordered three.

JANUARY - Ryan began producing one hundred fifty Q-2A Firebee target drones for the Army, Navy and Air Force.

FEBRUARY 11 - After circling for twelve hours to burn off fuel a Convair B-36 landed safely at North Island at 3:20am despite suspected landing gear damage.

FEBRUARY - Convair completed jet engine installations on over one hundred B-36A/B bombers. The program continued until Ft. Worth took over the contract in December.

- Convair created a Guided Missile Division.

- It cost $5.55 to fly from Los Angeles to San Diego in a California-Central Airline Martin 202.

MARCH 22 - USS ESSEX (CV-9) arrived at North Island carrying McDonnell F2H-2s, first jets over Korea. NO! F9F PANTHERS

MARCH - The Air Force ordered six YF-102 jet fighters from Convair for delivery in 1954. An XF-102 contract snarled in the Air Materiel Command over patent rights.

- Retired AF General Joe McNarney became the president of Consolidated-Vultee Aircraft Corporation. He learned to fly at the Signal Corps Aviation School on North Island in 1916.

- Convair want-ads described San Diego as smog-free.

- A proposed merger of Convair, The Atlas Corporation and Kaiser-Frazer Corporation seemed likely in sixty days.

- Convair's Annual Report depicted a rocket on the cover.

- Solar received a contract for J-40 engine parts, their largest single order. 1951 was their 25th Anniversary.

APRIL - An RCAF transport unloaded an Avro Orenda engine at Lindbergh Field for Solar afterburner designers. Solar also built stainless steel engine nacelles for Lockheed P2V-5s.

- Rohr began manufacturing Boeing B-52A jet pods and rear fuselage sections.

MAY 2 - LT Willis, pilot of a new Piasecki HUP-2, rescued an AD crew down in the water near the Coronados.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1952

MAY - The merger of Convair, Atlas and Kaiser-Frazer seemed doubtful.

JUNE 11 - A member of Patrol Squadron 42, LT Cook landed his PBM-5, 84755, in San Diego bay, after a tour in the Far East.

JUNE 13 - A fuel tank explosion during refueling destroyed a B-36 at Lindbergh Field just before turnover to the Air Force.

JULY 8 - The Coward Honey Bee completed its first flight at Montgomery Field, pilot Bill Chana.

AUGUST 5 - Six Convair crewmen jumped from a burning Convair B-36 over the sea off San Diego, and were rescued. Two of the Convair crew were lost.

AUGUST - The Convair Turbo-Liner completed its first transcontinental flight from San Diego to Washington, DC.

- The escort carrier TRIPOLI left port for Yokosuka after a brief visit, her decks filled with forty-five Republic F-84 Thunderjets for the Air Force.

NOVEMBER - San Diego Flying Club members tried to win a spot-landing contest at La Mesa Airport.

- A rumor: Convair tested a Piper J-3 and a North American AT-6 on waterskiis during development of the Seadart.

DECEMBER - Sam Shannon taxi-tested the Convair XF2Y-1 Seadart on San Diego bay. Each plane cost $5,291,560.

DURING THE YEAR - USS BOXER launched six Grumman Hellcat drones off the Korean coast. Scores of the radio-controlled Hellcats crowded the ramps at NAAS Ream Field. KD-21, a target drone unit based at Ream Field, operated small Radioplane KD2R-3 and Globe KD2G-2 targets from an LCIL, training destroyers for the Korean War.

- Convair manufactured thirty-three 340 Convair-Liners.

- Pacific Southwest Airlines purchased their two leased DC-3s plus two more that filled their hangar on the south side of Lindbergh Field.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1952

DURING THE YEAR - The Navy took over Brown Field again, and designated it an NAAS.

- At Gibbs Airport, the cost of a private pilot license including books and supplies, 17 hours dual, 18 hours solo, and 50 hours ground school was $266. Tie-down for a week or less was free. The hangar was one dollar a night for light airplanes. Shop labor was three dollars per hour. Used aircraft for sale:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1939 Piper Cub | 26124 | $250 |
| 1940 Luscombe 8A | N28482 | $640 |
| 1947 Cessna 120 | N2874N | $1195 |
| 1946 Taylorcraft BCD12 | | $650 |
| Ryan ST3-KR | N56030 | $695 |

During the year at the airports.

Borderland Airport-Foster and Diver
Flight instruction-charter-Luscombe dealer

Brown Field-Harry Culver
Breise Flying Service-Fred Breise and Carl Johnston
Piper/Stinson dealers
Adolph Dieterle
PBY sales

Gillespie Field, Manager Joe Rust.
Carson Flying Service-J.S/J.W. Carson
Aircraft and engine repair, Swift dealer
El Cajon Flying Service-Gerald Dennis
Aircraft and engine repair-Luscombe dealer
San Diego Parachute Co-Bob Fronius
Repair-packing-sales
Prevost F. Smith Parachute Co
Manufacturing
Southern Cal Airmotive-Bouck and Wisner
Aircraft and engine repair-supply store
Speer Flying Service-Arnett Speer
Gas-flight instruction-Piper/Stinson dealer
La Mesa Flying Service-C.C.Adamis
Aircraft and engine repair

La Pressa Airport
La Pressa Flying Service-Epler and Durang
Flying instruction-gas-aircraft and engine repair-charter-storage-Cessna dealer

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1952

Lindbergh Field
- San Diego Skyway Freight Inc - Joe Hecker
  - Lobster hauling
- Swift Air Service-Dowdle and Snyder
  - Swift dealers
- Friedkin Aeronautics. Inc
  - Flight instruction-charter-aerial photo-banner tow-
  - Radio repair station-Luscombe dealer
- Nelson-Kelley Co
  - Gas-aircraft and engine repair-flight instruction-
  - charter-storage-Piper/Stinson dealer
- Acme Aircraft Instrument Co-Cox, Sparks, Stuart
  - Repair and sales

Montgomery Field
- Gibbs Flying Service-Bill Gibbs
  - Rental and charter-instruction-service-aircraft sales

National City Airport-Carl Morgan
- Flight instruction-charter-storage

Peik Airport
- Nance and Cooper Flight Academy
  - Flight instruction-charter-storage-aircraft and engine repair

San Diego Airpark-H. Sullivan
- Aircraft and engine repair-flight instruction-charter-gas-food
- Waller Flying Service-Don Waller
  - Flight instruction-aircraft and engine repair

Sweetwater Springs Airanch-F.J.Hansen

Wolfe's Airpark-Chuck Wolfe
- Flight instruction-gas-charter

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1953

JANUARY - The Navy designated NAAS Brown Field as the carrier practice field for pilots from NAS Miramar.(See July 1,1954.)

FEBRUARY - The Blue Angels flew a demonstration in their Grumman F9F-5 Panthers.

FEBRUARY 11 - Convair's four-engine turboprop seaplane, the R3Y, got the name Tradewinds.

MARCH - The Navy ordered twelve Tradewinds to replace the eight-year old Mars flying boats in the Fleet Logistics Air Wings.

MARCH - General Dynamics acquired control of Consolidated-Vultee Aircraft Corporation.

MARCH - Flying Tiger Line-marked Curtiss C-46 Commandos and Douglas DC-6s began loading and unloading cargos from their new station on Lindbergh Field.

APRIL 9 - After a successful first test flight, the Convair Seadart trailed steam and white caps across San Diego bay while landing, then settled low in the water as Sam Shannon taxied for the Lindbergh Field ramp.

APRIL - Pacific Southwest Airlines got in a fare fight with California Central Airlines.

MAY - Ryan finished their new jet trainer for the Navy competition. Dave Williams was Project Engineer. The Navy refused it.

JUNE 30 - A Coast Guard P4Y got engine trouble and went into the sea off San Diego. One parachute was sighted.

JULY 15 - After the tail trim mechanism failed the Convair XP5Y-1 crashed six miles off the coast during its forty-second flight. Pilot Germeraad and the crew parachuted safely.

AUGUST 1 - The Navy established Special Weapons Unit, Pacific at NAS San Diego, with nuclear weapons capability.

AUGUST 8 - J.J. Harrigan died in El Cajon. In the twenties ex-Navy pilot Red Harrigan flew for Ryan.

AUGUST 11 - First flight of the Convair T-29D from Lindbergh Field, a military Convair-Liner for six students and an instructor.

SEPTEMBER - A Convair 240 and a Convair 340 that left the factory in different years ran into each other over Indiana. Both landed safely.

## 1953

NOVEMBER 22 - It was Airpower Day at Miramar Naval Air Station, the largest airshow ever seen in the western United States. The all-service show featured the Navy Blue Angels F9F-5 Panthers, and the Air Force Thunderbirds F-84Fs. Three Boeing B-47 and four Convair B-36 bombers flew formation over the crowd estimated at 250,000 people. Five hundred men and two hundred fifty airplanes participated.

Visitors enjoyed inspecting airplanes. Planes on the ramp included a Republic F-84F, two North American F-86 Sabrejets, a Northrop F-89 Scorpion, Lockheed F-94C Starfire, Boeing B-47, Douglas C-124, a big Vought F7U Cutlass, a little Beech T-34 trainer, and a 1918 Curtiss Jenny.

The flying began at noon and continued nonstop until 4 pm. Three Starfires rode their afterburners to 20,000 feet. And four F-86 Sabres broke the sound barrier at 43,000 feet. The Thunderbirds buzzed the field at 600 miles per hour. One B-47 refueled from a four-engine Boeing KC-97 tanker. A Douglas Skyray, the latest Navy fighter, flew by. The Marines demonstrated an assault landing by air. A Coast Guard flight crew showed how they performed rescues. Helicopters from HU-1 at Ream Field did a square dance. Bill Ivans did acrobatics in his glider at 8,000 feet cutting paper streamers on his way down. Over all flew a two hundred plane Navy formation.

DECEMBER - Flying Tiger Line airplanes flew four hundred forty-nine Chinese navy personnel from Lindbergh Field to Norfolk.

DURING THE YEAR - Several airlines ordered or received Convair 340s: United, Braniff, Alitalia, KLM, REA in Brasil, Lufthansa. Hawaiian Airlines cancelled their sixth 340 after the delivery date slipped.

The Consair Flyers flew a Piper Clipper, and two Luscombe 8s from their base at Montgomery Field. Members of the San Diego Flying Club at La Pressa Airport owned a Cessna 140A, Cessna 170A and 170B.

Fighter Squadron VF(AW)-3 began business at North Island with Douglas F3D Skyknights.

Navy pilots flew the North American AJ-2P Savage and McDonnell F2H-2 Banshee in VJ-61, the SNB and McDonnell F2H-3 in VC-3. LT Crabill flew a ten-year old Grumman Hellcat and Avenger on cross-country training hops.

The thermonuclear breakthrough which made possible the construction of powerful warheads small enough to mount in a missile came during the year and led to the recommendation of the Air Force Strategic Missiles Evaluation Committee that the program for the Convair Atlas ballistic missile which had been proceeding with only limited funds since 1951 be redirected, expanded and accelerated.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1953

Seen at North Island:

| | |
|---|---|
| ORCA (AVP-49) | January, then to the Philippines |
| WHITING (AV-14) | Until March, then to WestPac |
| KEARSARGE (CVA-33) | March to June, then back to Korea. |
| BOXER (CVA-21) | March, then to WestPac |
| ORISKANY (CVA-34) | May, then to overhaul |
| BATAAN (CVL-29) | June and July, then to WestPac |
| VALLEY FORGE (CV-45) | June to August, then to overhaul |
| SAIPAN (CVL-48) | October, then to Japan |
| ESSEX (CVA-9) | December, then to WestPac |
| RENDOVA (CVE-114) | December, then to WestPac |
| POINT CRUZ (CVE-119) | December |
| WINDHAM BAY (CVE-92) | Unknown date |

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1954

JANUARY - Convair delivered the 501st Convair-Liner.

- The Navy cancelled the Convair Seadart contract because of J-34 engine problems. A week later the Navy ordered fifty Seadarts.

- The new Convair R3Y-2 Tradewinds seated one hundred plus, and featured bow loading through an 80 X 100 opening, a flying LST.

- Ryan began building Corporal E rocket engines, and thirty-five Firebee drones for the Army.

- North Island established a shop to ramp-test and overhaul the Vought Regulus, a subsonic missile driven by a turbojet engine with a rocket-assisted take-off.

FEBRUARY - HU-1 furnished a Sikorsky HO3S helo from NAAS Ream Field during filming of a water pickup scene in the ocean off La Jolla for the motion picture Bridges of Toko-Ri.

- Ryan lost the Navy trainer competition with their side-by-side seated trainer. Carrier planes had tandem seats.

MARCH 3 - The aircraft carrier BOXER (CVA-21) got underway from North Island for operations with the Seventh Fleet in the Far East. Aboard was Air Group 21 with the F9F-6 Cougars of VF-121.

MARCH 26 - After the pilot baled out and his Grumman F9F-6 headed for San Diego, another F9F-6 intercepted the runaway and diverted it out to sea. How?

MARCH - Convair rolled out the XFY-1 Pogo, a T-40 powered VTO tail-sitter with a delta wing.

- The directors approved a merger between Consolidated-Vultee and General Dynamics. Convair retained its name.

- The Air Force tested the operational suitability of the Ryan Firebee at Holloman ADC, New Mexico.

APRIL 1 - Military Air Transport Service received their first C-131A, based on the Convair-Liner.

APRIL 1 - Three sweptwing Grumman F9F-6 Cougars of VF-21 flew from Miramar NAS to Floyd Bennett NAS near New York in under four hours with one mid-air refueling.

APRIL - The first production Convair F-102 rode a truck to Edwards AFB. Convair also worked on a TF-102 trainer with side-by-side seating.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1954

APRIL - The Convair XF-92 retired to the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio.

- A new helicopter airline, San Diego Airways, began flying passengers and mail from Lindbergh Field on three routes, La Jolla, Borrego, and National City.

- American Airlines began nonstop service, from San Diego to Washington, DC with Douglas DC-7 aircraft.

- Solar got a $6.6 million dollar order for Pratt & Whitney J-57 engine parts.

MAY - Ryan began building a $175,000 jet engine test cell, largest in the San Diego area.

- Convair considered switching engines in the F-102, from the J-67 to the J-75 - anything to pass Mach 1.

JUNE 17 - After dockside testing at North Island, USS HANCOCK(CV-19), off the coast near San Diego, launched CDR H.J.Jackson in a Grumman S2F-1, the first steam catapult launch of an aircraft by an American aircraft carrier. As tests continued through the month, a total of 254 launches were made with the S2F, AD-5, F2H-3, F2H-4, FJ-2, F7U-3 and the F3D-2.

JUNE 21 - The Air Force Air Research and Development Command got responsibility for the Convair Atlas program.

JUNE - The Air Force ordered eighty-nine Ryan Firebees.

JULY 1 - The Navy commissioned NAAS Brown Field, formerly Brown Field, managed by the county. The CO was CDR N.A.Johnson.

JULY - Ryan got its first production contract from the Air Force for Q-2 Firebee drones.

- United Air Lines received the last of fifty-five Convair-Liners.

- The Convair C-99 visited Lindbergh Field - the last time?

AUGUST 1 - The Convair Pogo completed its first flight at Moffett Field, without transition to a horizontal attitude.

AUGUST 3 - The Convair Seadart exceeded the speed of sound. It used two sets of J-34 engines in six months of tests.

AUGUST - Ryan's VTO fighter neared completion.

- A Convair Seadart made four successful landings in the ocean off Point Loma.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1954

AUGUST - Convair built a rocket test facility on five acres at Ft. Rosecrans.

- ARDC activated the Western Development Division to manage the Convair Atlas research and development and testing with the highest Air Force priority given to the program.

SEPTEMBER - Convair worked a Navy contract for operational study of a flexdeck rubber mat landing system.

- One of San Diego's earliest aviators, Bertrand Acosta, died in Colorado, 59 years old, after a colorful and record-making aviation career elsewhere.(See 1909)

- Convair showed the Cargo Freighter, a cargo version of the Convair-Liner.

OCTOBER - Frank Hernandez and Roy Bucholz were each building a Stitts Playboy airplane. Hernandez wanted to establish an Experimental Aircraft Association chapter in San Diego.

- The CAA ordered checks of the Ryan Navion wing fuselage connection bolt holes for elongation.

- Beecraft Associates, the company that built the Wee Bee and Honeybee, changed its name to Bee Aviation Associates to stop confusion with Beechcraft.

- The CAA switched commercial aviation to the use of knots and nautical miles instead of miles per hour.

NOVEMBER 2 - Skeets Coleman flew the Convair Pogo at NAAS Brown Field from hover to level flight and back to hover.

NOVEMBER 4 - During a press demonstration a Convair Seadart exploded in midair over San Diego bay killing test pilot Charles Richbourg.

NOVEMBER - Ryan began a Boeing contract building the KC-135 aft fuselage and stabilizer torque box. Rohr's contract called for KC-135 engine struts, pods and horizontal stabilizers.

- Convair prepared plans for a jet-powered Vertical Take-Off aircraft, and studied rocket-powered VTO fighters.

- The Air Force would make a production decision in December on the Convair F-102. It hinged on the flight test schedule to reach Mach 1.2. Its current top speed was Mach .98 with a J-57 engine.

DECEMBER 20 - Richard Johnson piloted the area-ruled Convair YF-102A past Mach 1 for the first time at Edwards AFB.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1954

DECEMBER - Convair was announced to be building the Atlas ICBM for the Air Force.

DECEMBER - The Navy announced the Seadart needed considerable work before being ordered into production.

DURING THE YEAR - Ryan Aeronautical Corporation received contracts for GE J47 engine components, Wright turbojet afterburners, a one million dollar classified rocket or atomic-powered project, and developed the ceramic-liner technique.

- San Diego was one of 17 West Coast cities where first class mail (3-cents) went by air space available.

- Convair-Liners made the newspapers after belly landings at Buffalo Municipal Airport, and Chicago, a nine fatality crash in Wyoming, two more fatalities in a mid-air collision over Columbus, Ohio, plus two jammed landing gear incidents that ended safely.

- Solar received contracts for Douglas C-124 and GE J-47 components, and a one million dollar AF order for Mars turbines to be put in Lockheed C-121 Constellations.

- The Ford Building in Balboa Park housed an Aeronautics school. Walter Coates was one of the instructors.

- Miramar, Navy auxiliary field, two and a half miles north of Miramar NAS, also known as Hourglass Field, was renamed Miramar OLF(Outlying Field).

- The Consair Flyers had an Aeronca 15AC, Luscombe 8E and a Piper PA-16 based at Montgomery Field.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1955

JANUARY 26 - At North Island a North American FJ-3 Fury took off and climbed to 10,000 feet in 83 seconds, setting a new record. A Norfolk, Virginia pilot beat it two days later.

JANUARY - Sharpe Memorial Community Hospital named for Donald N. Sharpe, USAAF, a young man from San Diego killed over Germany December 23, 1944.

- Convair got a production contract for the Atlas.

- Ryan bought Rolls Royce Avon jet engines for the Model 69, soon to be designated XF-109, later to be the X-13 Vertijet in the Air Force X-plane series.

FEBRUARY 26-March 7 Glider pilots held the Ninth Annual Pacific Coast Mid-Winter Soaring Championship at Torrey Pines Glider Port.

FEBRUARY - Convair built a beaching cradle. It cut beaching time for large seaplanes from one hour to ten minutes.

MARCH 22 - Convair and TWA personnel discussed the Model 18. TWA wanted it. It became the CV-880, a big loser.

MARCH - Ryan profited most as a sub-contractor. It had a forty-million dollar backlog.

- Convair kept the XFY Pogo under a teepee covered with yellow plastic at NAAS Brown Field while dismantling it for overhaul. Convair tried to sell some to the Navy as trainers. No sale.

- Ryan got multi-million dollar sub-contracts for North American F-86 aft fuselages and Boeing KC-135 jet tanker transport fuselage midsections.

- At Edwards Air Force Base, the Convair F-102A flew supersonic 100 mph faster than design performance.

MAY - Ryan got a $1,250,000 order from Convair for CV-340 power packs.

- The single ski Convair Seadart made short hops off the water in taxi tests. Close by at anchor, a Navy LSD acted as trial mother ship during the tests of single and twin-ski versions.

- The U.S. Air Force ordered 28 Convair TF-102A trainers.

JUNE - Solar got a million dollars to make afterburners for a new Curtiss-Wright engine.

- Skeets Coleman began building the Triphibian, a roadable amphibious airplane that he designed to fly at 200 mph.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1955

JUNE - VF-121 qualified for aerial refueling by hooking up there Grumman F9F-8 Cougars to an AJ tanker plane. The hose broke on one pilot. He landed on North Island trailing forty feet of fuel hose.

- Ryan stopped producing KDA-1 Firebee drones until 1957.

JULY - Convair trucked the first production F-102A to Edwards AFB.

- Rohr began a development program on all-metal honeycomb stainless steel structure.

- HANCOCK loaded fourteen Vought F7U Cutlass jets from VF-124, first sea duty for the new planes.

AUGUST - Convair released drawings of a jet transport, but believed Boeing and Douglas already had the market. Howard Hughes may have wanted the Convair design.

- Solar and Bristol Aeroplane Co. reached agreement on afterburner development.

- Walt Mooney flew the Bee Honey Bee to the EAA Fly-In at Oshkosh, Wisconsin. It won Most Outstanding Aircraft Design.

- Convair delivered the first R3Y-2 Tradewinds to Patuxent River.

- The single ski Seadart performed better than the twin ski because it was lighter with less resistance and vibration. Three Navy test pilots from Patuxent River flew the planes here in San Diego.

- Ryan trucked their VTO, XF-109, to Edwards AFB for flight testing.

- Convair got money for pre-production work on the F-102B.

SEPTEMBER - NACA revealed the area rule concept discovered in 1951. It was verified by rocket-powered model tests of Convair F-102 models flown on rockets.

- Sam Urshan developing the Air-Chair(destroyed in museum fire in 1978). Urshan became impressed with the need for emergency transportation after a crash in the Korean War. He also published the Home-Built Designers and Builders Handbook.

- Ryan produced the automatic, self-contained airborne navigation system after three year's flight testing.

OCTOBER 30 - The Navy named the field at NAS Miramar for Admiral Mitscher.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1955

OCTOBER - Sub-contractors built fifty percent of the Convair F-102.

- Frank Hernandez established Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 14 in San Diego.

NOVEMBER 8 - Test pilot Richard Johnson completed a 30-minute first test flight of the Convair TF-102A at Edwards AFB. Used a ribbon braking parachute. Johnson said it handled like the F-102.

NOVEMBER 11 - A Douglas AD-5N crashed into USS HOPEWELL (DD-681) near San Diego, burning the three fliers and five sailors, and killing two sailors.

NOVEMBER - The Air Force contracted Convair to design, develop and fabricate the Azuza system for $240,000.

DECEMBER 10 - The Ryan VTO F-109, redesignated X-13, completed its first conventional flight without vertical take off.

## DURING THE YEAR

PSA sold four DC-3s and bought four DC-4s from Capital Airlines.

Local civilian airplanes included those like Aeronca 7AC, N85397 at National City Airport, Taylorcraft N33979 at Gillespie Field, and Cessna 140, N72178 at La Pressa. A Cessna Bobcat flew from Lindbergh Field.

Few local pilot's resumes matched that of Rohr's Clyde Harrison. Taught by Lincoln Beachey, he soloed a Curtiss pusher in December 1914; flew in the 94th Aero Squadron in WW I; was a USN/USMC pilot; flew in the Diggins Flying Circus and joined the Caterpillar Club.

Don Waller and his son closed eight year-old San Diego Air Park, one of ten local airfields closed in the 1950s. Today the strip is a straight and level piece of Clairemont Drive.

FOR SALE: CONVAIR 340s. Continental Airlines ordered ten. Saudi Arabian Airlines bought six. USAF and Real S.A. Transportes Aereos bought two each. Avensa got two, and Mohawk Airlines its first one. The Strategic Air Command and Military Air Transport Command ordered ten cargo-personnel CV-340s. Scandinavian Airlines to get eleven. Aero O/Y Finnair to receive one.

Two Convair 240s, and one 340 crashed elsewhere during the year killing 73 people.

FOR SALE: CONVAIR 440s(a modified 340). Continental ordered three. LACSA, Alitalia, and the Australian government each ordered two. Real Transportes S.A. ordered four. Sabena ordered twelve. Swissair ordered eight. Delta Airlines bought five.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1955

### DURING THE YEAR

Convair delivered 36 C-131B electronic test and trooper planes (military CV-340) to the Air Force.

Convair began work on the seaplane ramp building a $3.5 million wind tunnel for aircraft up to 4.5 times the speed of sound for test sections of four square feet.

Ryan got an Air Force contract for 539 Q-2A Firebees. They may be used for photo reconnaissance and as a combat missile.

Narmco Mfg. Company built aluminum honeycomb sandwich components like rudders, wing tips, elevons, wheel doors and wing fences for the Convair F-102.

FAWTUPAC, Fleet All Weather Training Unit Pacific, moved to North Island from Barber's Point, Oahu, flying Douglas F3D Skyknights.

The seaplane tender ORCA (AVP-49) supported VP-48's Martin P5M Marlins.

Aircraft carriers training in the local operating area and moored at North Island.

HANCOCK (CVA-19)
HORNET (CV-12)
KEARSARGE (CVA-33)
LEXINGTON (CVA-16)
PHILIPPINE SEA (CVA-47)
POINT CRUZ (CVE-119)
PRINCETON (CVS-37)
SHANGRI-LA (CV-38)
WRIGHT (CVL-49)

Intense Naval activity at Ream Field featured the Piasecki HUP-2 and Bell HTL-4 helicopters of HU-1 squadron. Each carrier took a HUP along for utility and rescue purposes.

At NAAS Brown Field, VU-3 flew the Douglas JD towing targets, and air-launching Firebee targets for pilot training.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1956

JANUARY - Success of Convair Seadart single-ski operation excited new interest in the Navy.

FEBRUARY - Ryan's VTO got the Air Force designation X-13. Pete Girard made test flights at Edwards AFB with landing gear.

FEBRUARY - First Convair 440 delivered; seventy-four on order.

FEBRUARY - Convair accelerated the construction of the first Atlas missile at San Diego. The Russians raced down the same track.

MARCH 22 - Convair and TWA held a meeting in La Jolla to discuss the Model 18. It became the 880, a four-jet transport.

MARCH - Bee Aviation Associates advertised Honey Bee plans for sale.

APRIL 6 - Attack Squadron 126 and Fighter Squadron 126 formed at NAS Miramar with the twin-turbojet Vought F7U-3 Cutlass. This unconventional tailless aircraft resulted from German research during World War 2.

APRIL 11 - Convair announced their Model 22, the Skylark 600. They billed it as the fastest commercial airplane in the world, a new jet transport to compete with the Boeing 707 and Douglas DC-8. Convair promised Howard Hughes first choice of delivery in 1960 at $3.5 million each.

MAY - Howard Hughes expected to buy 20 to 25 Convair Skylark jet transports for TWA.

JUNE 26 - Fighter Squadron 141 received the first Douglas F4D Skyray at NAS Miramar, and began turning in their McDonnell F2H-3 Demons.

JUNE - Ryan was building a lightweight, single place VTOL research plane named Vertiplane for the Navy and finished it the next year.

JUNE - The name Golden Arrow replaced the name Skylark, Convair's jet transport announced in April. Convair planned a gold-colored exterior, and delivery in late 1959 with J-79 engines. TWA and Delta Airlines planned to spend over $200 million on thirty and ten Golden Arrows, respectively. Aeronaves de Mexico negotiated for five.

JUNE - The Navy persuaded Convair to not build their Atlas plant in Sycamore Canyon. Instead it went up north of Montgomery Field along Clairemont Mesa Boulevard.

JULY - Composite Squadron SIX became Heavy Attack Squadron SIX flying Lockheed Neptunes, and North American Savage nuclear strike aircraft. VAH-6 became part of the newly commissioned Heavy Attack Wing.

# SAN DIEGO FLYING DAYS - A CHRONOLOGY

## 1956

SEPTEMBER 20 - Convair announced the first orders for the Golden Arrow jet transport.

SEPTEMBER - A Convair R3Y trailed fueling nozzles to four Grumman F9F-8's at the same time off La Jolla.

OCTOBER 5 - Grumman F9F-8 Cougars in Fighter Squadron 144 made a transcontinental round trip flight from NAS Miramar.

OCTOBER - After Convair decided against the gold anodized finish for the Golden Arrow, the new airliner got the name that stuck - 880. It stood for 880 feet per second.

OCTOBER - NACA Research at Langley Field concluded tail-sitting was the only practical method of vertical takeoff for high-performance aircraft.

OCTOBER - Convair 440 deliveries leveled off at eight a month.

NOVEMBER - Convair planned two Atlas test sites (no firing), one each on Point Loma and in Sycamore Canyon. The prototype Atlas arrived at Patrick AFB for testing.

NOVEMBER - Iberia, Eastern, Martin, REAL S/A Transportes Aer, Kashumaki, Ansett, and the Italian Air Force ordered a total of 125 Convair 440's.

NOVEMBER - Ryan flew an Air Force Lockheed T-33 for development of a supersonic missile guidance package by placing equipment in the tip tank.

DECEMBER 26 - Richard Johnson flew the Convair F-106A at Edwards AFB on its first flight of 20 minutes.

DECEMBER - In an unusual Navy experiment an Air Force H-21 helicopter towed a DUKW, an LCU and a World War II LST off Coronado.

DURING THE YEAR - Ryan got Navy contracts for KDA Firebee drones.

The list of aircraft carriers and seaplane tenders in San Diego included:

BENNINGTON (CVS-20)
HORNET (CVA-12)
LEXINGTON (CVA-16)
PHILIPPINE SEA (CVS-47)
PRINCETON (CVS-37)
WASP (CV-18)
HANCOCK (CVA-19)
KEARSARGE (CV-33)
ORCA (AVP-49)
PINE ISLAND (AV-12)
SHANGRI-LA (CV-38)